Week ending September 7 1957 *Every Wednesday Fourpence*

JOHN BULL

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by Dr. P. E. Hodgson

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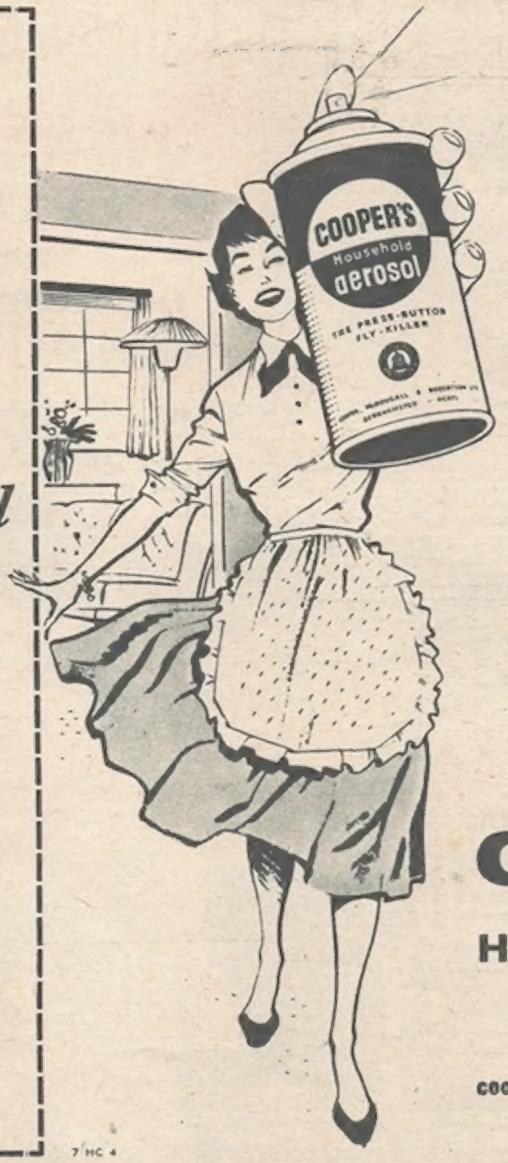

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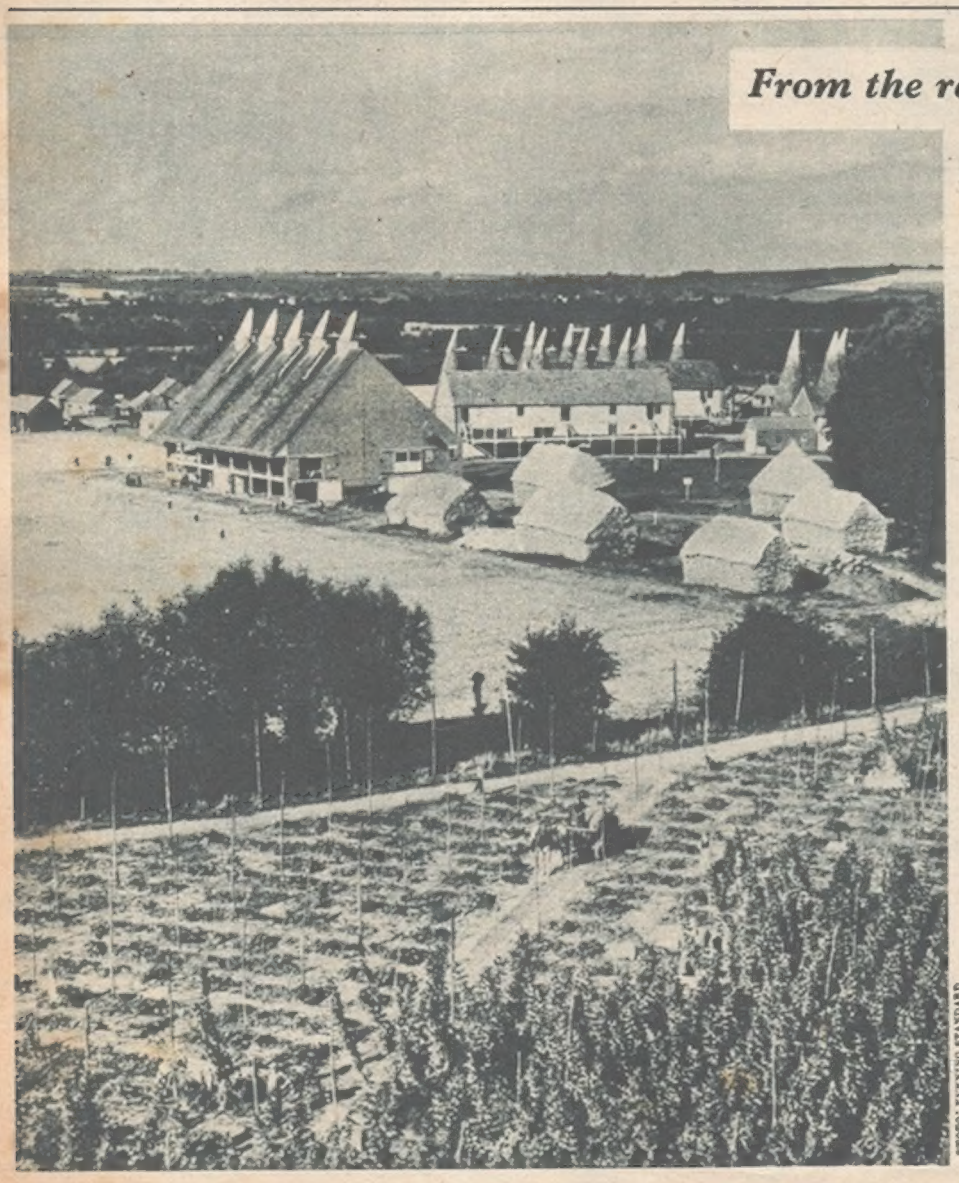

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CHANCERY 3344 SEPTEMBER 7, 1957 VOLUME 102 NUMBER 2671

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Psychology helps John Heseltine's paintings

JOHN HESELTINE has more than an artist's interest in people, and recently he enrolled as an external student at London University to study psychology. As he hoped, the course helped his work. When he came to illustrate Martin Maycock's story, *End Of The Holiday*, which begins on page 7, he used his new-found knowledge to portray the nervousness, irritability and anxiety of the characters.

Heseltine himself is quite free from nervousness and anxiety: unlike the roof climbers in the story, he isn't even afraid of heights. "Three years of watches in crow's nests during the war cured me of that," he says. He joined the navy in 1942 straight from art school, at the age of nineteen. "But I didn't see the world: I had to be content with British seaside resorts." Serving with coastal patrols, however, gave Heseltine an opportunity of painting something other than seascapes. His sketchbooks of that period are full of designs for houses.

He had to wait until eight years after the war before he could put his architectural ideas into practice. Then he built his "ideal home" at Ongar, in Essex. There his wife Margaret is kept busy barring the way to Heseltine's studio to their fourteen-month-old daughter Elaine. And Heseltine divides his spare time between his studio, the garden, and Fred. Fred is an Alsatian dog, "a brute of a beast who terrifies the neighbourhood." Regularly he walks the dog to the local pub, in traditional style. "I have to go there quite often," says Heseltine. "A big dog like Fred needs a lot of exercise."

BEBE DANIELS, who is the first contributor to our new series, "A Meal To Remember," on page 26, is herself a frustrated cook. "I get so little time for it." However, she has become an expert on salads, and is the co-author of a book of salad recipes. "In Britain," she says, "you have the most wonderful vegetables in the world that can be used in salads, but so little advantage is taken of them. Few English people, for instance, use sliced cabbage as a salad base—what we Americans call cole slaw."

The Lyons's home, near Hyde Park, is also used as an office, and there the scripts for their radio and television shows are written. During this "script season" there are often fourteen or fifteen people—writers, secretaries and other workers—in the house, and they all have to be fed. "I leave the meal-planning to Ben," says Bebe. "I've got a one-track mind, but he can do twenty things at once. Sometimes he has to plan forty-two meals a day. It's more like a canteen at times than a home."

Bebe eats little when she is working at full pitch. "A jar of yoghourt and a cup of coffee for breakfast, a scrambled egg and tea or coffee for lunch. I find that too much food gets in the way of concentration."

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Free Speech

- Loading children with debts
- When woodpigeons help the farmers
- Men who fuss over petty pains

My grandparents lived frugally so that they would have enough money to give my father what they called a good start in life.

Because of this he always feels under an obligation. He is torn between a desire to provide generously for their old age and to save enough to give me a financial boost when I come of age next year.

It's time that this practice of loading each new generation with debts of honour ceased. My parents should use their money to keep themselves independent of me at a time when I have a family of my own to strive for.—G. R., Hillingdon, Middlesex.

Following The Poles

I lost my way while motoring down the lonely Shropshire lanes. But an American friend pointed out that all we had to do was to follow a pair of telephone wires until we reached the main road.

There we could find our direction by looking at the cross-bars holding the insulators, because these would be fixed to the London side. — A. Baggott, Oxley, Wolverhampton.

"This is no longer true everywhere," says the G.P.O. "On poles following main routes the old practice was to fix the cross-bars on the side nearest to the larger town. So, although they would be nearest London on the main London-Birmingham route, they might be nearest Birmingham on other roads."

Magnetic TV

When the picture vanished from our TV screen during a play my husband and I decided to carry on listening to the sound only. Fifteen minutes later I was amused to see his eyes still trained rigidly on the blank screen. "Oh yes! I forgot that we had lost the picture," he said, when I reminded him that he need no longer look.—Mrs. N. Haines, Colchester Road, Leicester.

No Home Cooking

No wonder foreign visitors have a poor opinion of British cooking. They are never allowed to taste any.

Most of our first-class restaurants offer a watered-down version of French *haute-cuisine*—and, after all, the French only took cooking to such

a high degree because their foods were once of such inferior quality that all sorts of sauces and other culinary smokescreens were necessary to make them palatable. British regional dishes such as tripe and onions, haggis, ham cooked in cider, fried herrings in oatmeal and bilberry pie hold their own against Continental concoctions any day. But our restaurants are so blinded by tradition that they don't give these dishes a chance. —E. Parker, Surbiton, Surrey.

Painless Extraction

Your article on vintage cider amused me very much ("Packing The Punch In Apples," July 27). My husband drank half a pint of it when we were on holiday last year, and shortly afterwards I happened to mention

that I had seen a beautiful pair of ear-rings in a shop window. To my astonishment he gave me a £5 note to go and get them. He never asked me if I *had* got them, nor did he ask for any change, so you can take it from me that vintage cider is a stunner.—Mrs. M. Anderton, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Burial Traditions

I was interested to read about the old Christian custom of burying lay members of the congregation with their feet towards the east but clergymen with their feet to the west ("Free Speech," August 17). Buddhists are buried with their heads to the north and faces upward as Buddha died, and Mohammedans lie on their right sides facing Mecca.—J. Oliver, Birmingham.

Plea For Pigeons

Mrs. L. M. Cormack, of Hull, raised some interesting points in her letter about the increasing pigeon populations in big cities ("Free Speech," August 3). City pigeons are not very destructive, but in large numbers they can be a nuisance because of the mess they make when roosting on buildings and because they sometimes peck out the mortar for its lime content.

Woodpigeons, which rarely perch on buildings, have a bad name for damaging crops, mostly newly sown corn. But at other times they live on tree seeds such as acorns, and a man who once planted the contents of a woodpigeon's crop reaped a large collection of weeds hated by farmers. —E. B. Tenner (former overseer of birds, London Zoo), Finchley, N.3.

Killing Pace

So T. M., of London, wants vehicles to travel at walking pace so that nobody would get killed ("Free Speech," August 17)! Does that include the bus he travels on, or ambulances, police cars and fire engines? According to a recent survey, every drop in traffic speed of one mile an hour costs the country £30 million every year.—A. Liston, Edinburgh.

Heated Resistance

E. T., of Tewkesbury, is wrong when he says that men's nervous systems are more highly developed than women's ("Free Speech," August 17). It's his pride which can't stand hot washing-up water. His finger-tips would stand the heat if necessary for a hobby of his own choosing. Football fans and fishermen disregard the elements. Doctors, mountaineers and housewives press on because they *must*.

It's men's preoccupation with self which betrays them into petty pains, just as their objection to cramped conditions creates tense and uncomfortable muscles, where a woman's acceptance of awkwardness as part of life leaves her muscles relaxed and free to get on with the job. — Mrs. Rose Kosmyryk, Preston, Lancashire.

Noticing The Point

When driving through Burnley, Lancashire, the other day I saw a notice warning motorists to drive carefully because the schoolchildren were on holiday. This showed that someone was on the right track. It's far better to attack particular points about road safety than to issue vague exhortations to take care.—N. W. Anderson, Whitefield, Manchester.

Barbed Preserver

Even if W. Duncan, of Glasgow, had omitted his address it would be obvious from his letter attacking the use of barbed wire ("Free Speech," August 10) that he was a town dweller. I live in the country on the verge of common land, and barbed wire is the only thing that keeps marauding animals out of the garden. Wire netting or plain wire are just pushed down. — J. R. Edwards, Cwmllynfell, Swansea, Glamorgan.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

How *do* they know who hasn't paid? Well, if your sunglasses haven't slipped down your nose yet, you're a new arrival; and if the children's sand castle is nearly finished, it's likely you were sitting there during the morning session. So don't bother to keep a look-out or pretend to be asleep. The attendants, says cover artist Batchelor, are too wily for that: otherwise they would not collect £1,000 in a day on some popular beaches. But oh! gathering those forty thousand sixpences can be hard on the feet. Anybody seen a vacant deck-chair?

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END OF THE HOLIDAY

by MARTIN MAYCOCK

All right, the trip was a failure. But he could make amends—if Kathy let him

THE hotel manager was a little man with a bad limp. He breathed heavily as he led the Cowdrays up the narrow staircase with its rose-patterned wallpaper. On the fifth floor he stopped, panting, and said: "Just two floors more, *m'sieur . . . 'dame.*"

Kathy looked back reproachfully at Tom as they started up the next flight. On the seventh floor, the little man opened the door of Room 38. "For *m'sieur et madame,*" he said. "For the *petits,* a little more stairs. . . ."

Kathy went up to settle in Chris and Timothy. Tom swung his bag on to the bed, and went over to the window. It wasn't a bad room at all: clean, double-bed, wardrobe, a couple of easy chairs; an alcove with a wash-basin; and, from where he was standing, a grandstand view of the city.

There was a cinema down there across the way. He grinned at the poster for *Les Aventures de Brigitte.* Might be fun, he thought. But not with Kathy as she'd been today.

He could hear her now. She was speaking French to the little hotel man. Tom hardly understood a

This was going to be a marvellous evening. . . . But now Tom glimpsed the worry around Kathy's eyes; the hints; the clock-watching

word, but it was obvious that Kathy was off on some new flap. He gazed for a moment at a flock of typists bobbing along the pavement in a froth of nylon. Ruefully, he rubbed a hand across his stubbly cheek, and turned away to shave.

Whatever it was that was troubling Kathy, she was making the most of it. There was the squeak and grind of doors opening. She had changed to her loud, clear, listen-to-mother voice and she was saying something to the children.

Tom soaped his face slowly, staring into the mirror in the little alcove. He had to admit it; the holiday was a failure. Oh, he knew that happened to every family once in a while. But for him and Kathy it was serious; perhaps irreparable.

For years they had not had a proper holiday. The business had taken every week he had, and Kathy had been tied by the boys. Somehow, it seemed, they had built up their own separate worlds, apart from each other. In the few hours' leisure he could snatch, he wanted no bother, a bit of fun. But Kathy had been getting so flustered and drawn, fretting about the boys' health, school and a hundred other things.

He had thought that, if he got her right away, took her abroad because that's what she'd missed most, she would come young again and relax. But away from home she had bothered about reservations; currency; don't swim for an hour after meals; go easy on the wine. And nothing he could say seemed to help.

"Tom. . . ." She was calling him now down the stairs.

He dried his face quickly. "Coming . . . coming . . ." he muttered as he lumbered up to her.

THE boys' room was identical to theirs. Kathy had clothes out on the bed. Chris was in a chair with a comic. Timothy was fiddling with a toy car.

Kathy said: "Really, Tom. . . . I leave one thing to you, and this is where you land us up; a pokey place like this. No lift, and eight floors to climb. I don't suppose it would worry you, but have you thought what we'd do if there was a fire?"

A fire! Tom ran a stubby hand through his well-groomed hair. Fire! That always worried Kathy. Her mother had been just the same.

"Now listen, dear," he said patiently. "How old do you think this place is? Sixty years? Seventy? If it's been safe all this time, there's no reason why just the one night we are staying here——"

"Tom, for heaven's sake be sensible," Kathy snapped. "We're eight floors up. Something might catch in the night and, if the staircase was cut, where would we be? It's only common sense to check up on these things."

Her voice was controlled, over-controlled, but her eyes were terrible with some private glimpse of horror. Tom said: "Now then, Kathy. Be reasonable. Just suppose there was some trouble, we'd be all right."

He waved at the window; then moved across to look out. My, it was quite a way down. He stood uncertain for a short moment. People were trickling into *Les Aventures de Brigitte*. A neat little girl in a white blouse and black skirt was laughing with her boy at the street corner. Evening strollers were lingering on the pavements. A very long way down.

Heavily, he turned back to Kathy. "Well, then," he said firmly. "There'll be a fire escape."

A flash of triumph crossed Kathy's face. "There is," she said. "Of a kind. I got the man to show me." She moved to the door. "I think you should see how it works."

There was a beseeching in her eyes. Tom followed her. "You too, boys," Kathy said. "It won't do you any harm to see again."

She switched on the light and Tom followed her wearily to the end of the landing. There was a trap-door in the ceiling, newly painted. Kathy pulled a cord and an extending staircase swung down from it. "Up the stairs," she said brightly, more to the boys than to Tom. "Through the trapdoor. There's a way along the roof and down into the next house. You see, Christopher? You see, Timothy?"

The children were quiet, intent. Tom thought: *Fire Drill for Class Three*. He looked at his wife, calmer now and reassured. Why did she find life so trying?

When they were back in the boys' room, Kathy went to the cases again. Chris picked up his comic. Timothy lay down on the bed with his toy. Tom leaned against the door. But there wasn't any conversation coming, so: "I'll see to the car," he said, and went down.

Outside it was still very warm. A little old woman all in black was staring into a dress-shop window. Spread on chairs on the terrace of Au Chat Alsacien, two enormous men were sipping drinks and quarrelling quietly over a chess board.

Tom frowned as he swung past the young lovers still marking time on the corner.

When he got back, Kathy was down in their own room. She was sitting in her slip near the window, gazing at the roofs opposite all lit up now with the waning sun. Looking past her, Tom could see a plump woman in a brightly checked overall watering an attic window-box across the way.

He closed the door behind him and leaned against it, watching his wife's back. Her thick hair was loose and falling down to her sun-tanned shoulders. Her body had thickened with Chris and Timothy, but it was firm and rich still.

Without turning round, she put out a hand for him. "Tom," she said. "I'm sorry I made such a fuss. But there's so much these days to. . . ."

He bent over her with a kiss. She was too tense to respond fully. Even as he drew away, he saw the pucker of worry traced on her forehead, and felt a surge of yearning for her, for the slim, shy untroubled girl he had married fourteen years before.

She was still young, still beautiful. Couldn't she see that there was still time to be gay?

"Look, Kathy," he said. "Tomorrow night it'll be the coast, and the next night we'll be home. Let's forget it all, shall we, just for this evening, and have a real good time? Just you and me together."

She turned a troubled face towards him. "But what about the boys? Suppose they wake up and need us? Suppose Timothy. . . ."

"Suppose nothing. With all that fresh air, we won't get a squeak out of them till morning. Come on, dear, best bib and tucker."

He moved noisily to the wardrobe, humming, watching her out of the side of his eyes. The Lord be praised, he'd brought her round. She was doing her face.

HE slipped into his dark suit and checked through his wallet. Francs for tomorrow; sterling for the boat. There was plenty for tonight. He crammed the wallet into his back pocket and scrubbed at his hair with the brushes, beaming into the mirror. Then, while he waited for Kathy, he smoked a little cigar. Not that he liked it much, but it was all in the act. He watched appreciatively as Kathy pulled herself into a dress; it was the shiny pink affair. He liked that one. It did something for her, and it swished expensively when she moved.

"Ready?" she said, smiling at him now. . . .

The taxi sped dangerously through the traffic and across the river bridge. Tom leaned towards Kathy. "Tell him we want somewhere good," he said. "The real night life."

Kathy grimaced and murmured to the driver in French. When she leaned back, Tom took her hand. He was excited now, the way he'd not been for years—too many years. He gazed indulgently at the couples sauntering, entwined, past the plane trees and the news kiosks and the advertisements for Suze and Dubonnet and Machines à Coudre Singer. It was going to be a marvellous evening.

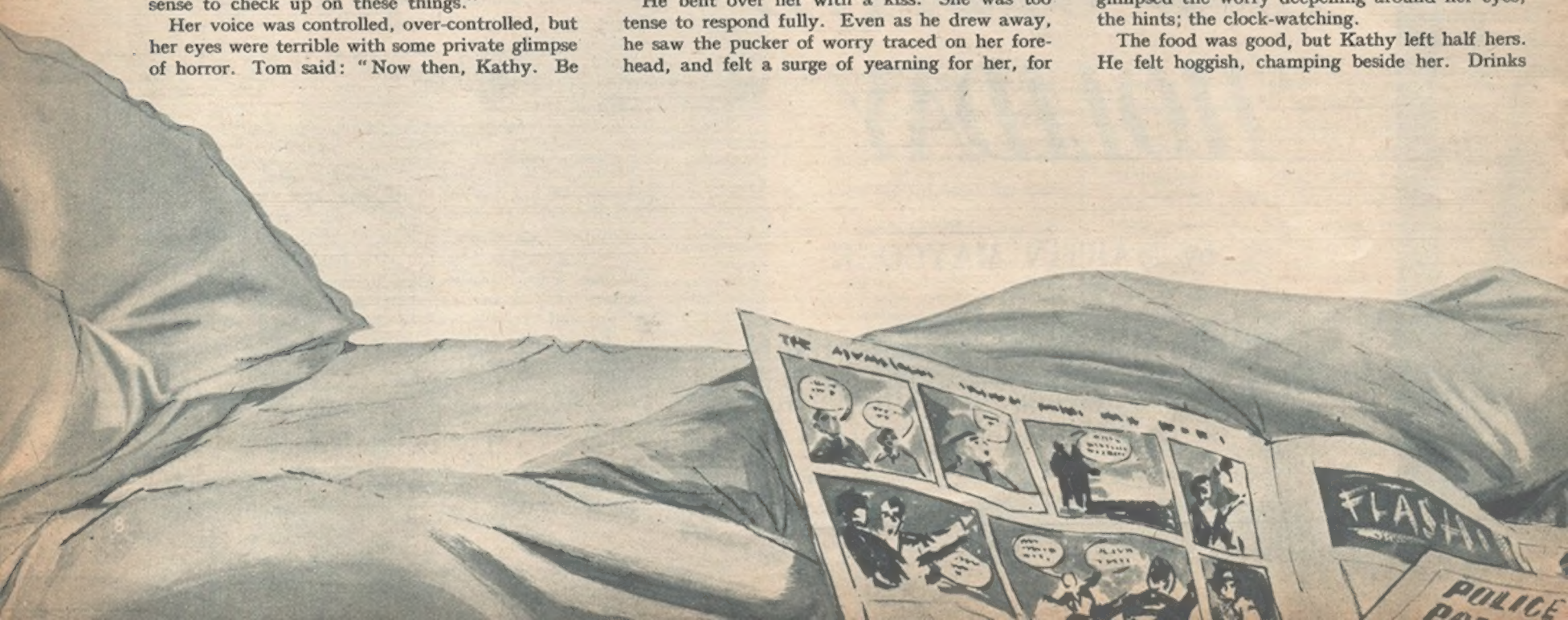
The taxi drew up by two fir trees in tubs and the words Chez Henriette in neon. Kathy left her wrap and they went down stairs lined with a frieze of Greek gods and goddesses. A bit much, Tom thought, and looked at Kathy anxiously.

They were given a table at the side of a dance floor, excitingly half-lit. On a dais three Africans in white dress suits were playing warm, slow, sticky music. Tom liked it, till he saw that Kathy was strained again, and fiddling with her ring.

She looked up, catching his eye. "Tom, do you think we should have left the boys? What if they get a sick turn, all alone there?"

He laid his hand over hers, willing her to forget her troubles, to let go. But he knew that it was going to be no use. Despairingly he glimpsed the worry deepening around her eyes; the hints; the clock-watching.

The food was good, but Kathy left half hers. He felt hoggish, champing beside her. Drinks



didn't help either. Kathy hardly touched her wine, and he finished the bottle..

Afterwards he ordered cognac, which was always a mistake for him. Kathy started again about Chris and Timothy and appendicitis and fires, till Tom got angry for his spoiled evening, the evening that was to have brought them together.

"Look, Kathy," he said. "They're fast asleep. They don't need you. Forget them." And that was the wrong thing to say. Kathy crept down inside herself and went all quiet and Tom felt more and more depressed.

He tried to hold her hand and she pushed him off. He smiled at the little African girl from the band who came singing round the tables, so that she stopped and sang especially for him. Kathy went pale with awkwardness and embarrassment. He made Kathy dance, and it was like dancing with a puppet. An old man told stories in French and English, and Tom clapped the longest of anyone.

Kathy wouldn't dance again, so he went round with a giggly American blonde from the next table. When he got back to Kathy, she was stiffly silent.

So that was that, thought Tom as he peeled off the franc notes and Kathy went for her wrap. He had tried; and it hadn't helped at all.

The drink hit him as they left the nightclub and he knew he couldn't face a taxi. "Let's walk back," he said. Kathy knew why he wanted to walk, and went on about his being a drunk and irresponsible, and how if anything had happened to the children she'd always hold him to blame.

"You go on ahead, then," he growled.

But she wouldn't leave him, not the way he was. So they went slowly back along the boulevards, a yard between them, past all the other happy people, past the lovers laughing softly down by the river, past all the inside people and him locked out.

He was feeling so grim that he had to stop at the terrace of a late café and sit down. Kathy got him some black coffee, and the waiter brought something in a glass. Between them they got him round. His head cleared suddenly and he felt sick, ashamed, sober. He took a quick look at his watch. One fifteen. He should never have left the boys alone for so long.

He knew what he ought to say to Kathy, but he couldn't bring himself to say it. If only she'd give him a chance to; if only she would understand. . . .

They were moving again, not speaking, and only a few streets from the hotel when the fire engine crashed past them. Tom stood quite still.

Surprisingly, it was Kathy who said: "It

Continued on page 29

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN HESELTINE

Tom heard Kathy's scream, and with a quick stumbling run up the stairs he was there, staring at the empty room and the empty bed

Mr. Ballyhoo blows filmland's trumpet

by ALAN LLOYD

When film companies want publicity for premières they call on Jess Yates. He turns out the marines or upsets historians to make a gala night glitter

ASSIGNED to organize the London première of *Zarak*, a film with an oriental theme, Jess Yates, an expert at staging premières, asked himself: What type of show would people expect in an Eastern potentate's palace?

His answer was to book 120 dancing girls, a chorus of men picked for their impressive physique, a German water spectacle fifty feet wide with 4,800 fountain jets, and a star bill including Eartha Kitt, Edric Connor, Martin Benson and dancer Tutte Lemkow.

Only a few hours before the opening, Yates, an energetic compound of artist, strategist and humorist, had his performers (most of whom were giving their time free, because the profit was going to charity) assembled for the first full rehearsal. Meanwhile, two engineers flown from Berlin were still working on the fountains, and a team of artists was putting the finishing touches to a "backcloth," which was actually painted on the rear wall of the cinema to allow Yates every available inch of space for the show.

The première, one of the most spectacular seen in the West End for some time, went through without a hitch. The film brought caustic comments from the critics.

Film premières, a surprising blend of talent, ballyhoo, big business and synthetic excitement, are designed to attract the maximum publicity for the pictures that they launch. Tickets for charity premières have sold for more than £100 each. Twenty-five guineas is a frequent charge for circle seats, and charity funds may benefit from the evening by thousands of pounds. The *Zarak* opening made £8,542 8s. for the Hungarian Relief Fund. The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and other R.A.F. organizations received £3,617 19s. 3d. from the first night of *The Dam Busters*, the only film which had two Royal "premières" on consecutive evenings. Princess Margaret attended the first, then the whole gala opening was staged again with the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester present.

Première organizers try hard to secure the

Richard Todd, who played an ace R.A.F. pilot in *The Dam Busters*, met Princess Margaret at the film's London première

For the stage show which he organized at the première of the film *Zarak*, Yates borrowed two hundred Eastern style costumes from the Paris Lido

American film magnate Howard Hughes held the première of *Underwater* beneath a swimming pool. Guests swam in wearing breathing apparatus

Just before the *Zarak* première it was found that Eartha Kitt's stage dress did not fit. She was hastily fitted with this chorus girl's costume and was acclaimed as a great success in the show

attendance of society celebrities and dignitaries at film first-nights. The American impresario and producer, Mike Todd, flew to England to persuade Lady Pamela Berry, one of London's most influential women, to vet the V.I.P. invitation list for the première of *Around The World In Eighty Days*.

Frequently first-night audiences have proved more impressive than the films. The London première of a recent American musical was attended by seven foreign ambassadors, three High Commissioners, the leader of the Labour Party in the House of Lords, the Foreign Secretary, the First Lord of the Admiralty, several M.P.s, the editors of three national newspapers, the editor of a chain of national magazines, the head of the B.B.C. Light programme, two generals, an admiral, about a hundred titled people, celebrities of business and sporting life and, of course, film stars.

Last year, the première of a mediocre knock-about comedy concerning the Royal Navy was attended by fourteen admirals.

When the film version of the British victory *The Battle Of The River Plate* was first shown in the West End the German ambassador not only accepted an invitation to the opening, but he also held a reception afterwards and complimented actor Peter Finch on his performance as Captain Langsdorff of the pocket battleship Graf Spee.

According to Yates, few film actors and actresses enjoy the premières of their own pictures. Those with a developed sense of artistry are seldom satisfied with their own performances; the others usually complain about the direction, the photography, or their co-performers. One well-known entertainment "star" arrived at the recent London première of a film for which she had done considerable studio work, took her seat in the circle, then waited in vain through the entire picture for her screen appearance. The director had cut all her scenes at the editing stage.

A few London first nights have cost as much as £6,000, but most film companies work on a three figure budget for their premières, sometimes as little as £200.

The première ritual has taken strange forms in different parts of the world. When *The Robe*, a film with a Biblical theme, was first shown in Zahle, Lebanon, a lamb was slaughtered in the cinema entrance while the owner of the cinema, his brother, and the staff danced round the victim. Blood was sprinkled liberally on the foyer steps and prayers were offered for the future of Cinemascope.

The South African première of *The Moon Is Blue* was held in an aeroplane flying over the Jan Smuts Airport at the time of its opening. And guests were taken to the Italian first night of *Summer Madness* in Venice by gondola. At least three people felt that the advantages of publicity warranted throwing themselves into canals before the proceedings were over.

When Japanese royalty showed itself at a public entertainment for the first time in history, the chosen occasion was the première of *A Star Is Born*. The invitation list was headed by the Empress Nagako, Crown Prince Akihito, Princess Chichibu and Princess Suga.

For the première of *Cockleshell Heroes*, a film about a group of Royal Marine Commandos, Yates decided to have squads of marines marching through the cinema. Military co-operation was obtained on the condition that marine officers attended rehearsals and approved the presentation of the scene. On the night of the première hundreds of marines were assembled in buses near Leicester Square. One by one the buses dropped the men at one side of the cinema, then moved round to wait at the other side. The marines marched in through an exit, down the aisles on either side of the stalls, countermarched across the stage, then back to the buses. That was all they saw of the show. "One half rarely knows what the other half is doing," says Yates.

Once, when working as a freelance before joining his present company, Warwick Film Productions, Limited, Yates bought a new Riley car with his fee for organizing a single first night performance.

A police inspector often sits in at première planning conferences to approve traffic arrangements. When Diana Dors drove through London in an open turquoise Cadillac and a dress of the same colour, to attend the first performance of a film called *Yield To The Night* (one of the few premières held during daylight), so many photographers and other interested people followed in taxis and cars that a major traffic jam ensued. No one has tried a large-scale daylight première since.

Gatecrashers are a frequent nuisance at film premières. Many of them claim to represent unknown newspapers and magazines. One hoaxer gained admission to *The Egyptian* by wearing a turban and announcing himself as the Maharajah of Parata (parata is Hindustani for unleavened bread). A smartly dressed woman once produced a telegram, purporting to originate from a guest who was unable to attend, offering her a seat. She was escorted to the door when the ticket holder arrived and disclaimed any knowledge of the telegram.

About fifty premières are held each year in London. Yates, who applies the aggregate of his experiences as a former organist, choir arranger, stage designer, producer and writer to the organization of premières, believes in keeping them "larger than life." He is not impressed by appeals for academic accuracy. In an Elizabethan prologue at one première his girls wore fishnet tights with period costumes cut away to reveal their legs. "My associates told me that it was all wrong," he says, "but for most people it looked better that way, and it is the general effect that matters."

Whenever possible, Yates avoids asking cinema staff to wear fancy costumes. "Unless you can be on the spot all the time, something usually goes wrong." At one big première he attended, the commissionaires were dressed as Elizabethan Yeomen of the Guard. Yates was horrified to see that they were wearing the uniforms with the buttons at the front when they should have been at the back. The letters ER, which should have decorated their chests, were across their backs like the numbers on football shirts.

On another occasion, period costumes were provided by the studios for the première of a film about King Arthur and his knights. When Yates arrived at the cinema a flustered wardrobe mistress rushed up to tell him that the medieval cloaks were too big. She pulled forward a small man who was almost completely enveloped in heavy, embroidered material.

Yates pointed out as calmly as he could that the "cloak" in question was a decorative cloth used to drape the horses of noblemen, and that the man had his head through the hole cut away for the horse's tail. THE END

A crashed car is all part of a night's work for the mobile police. Liverpool's

Car 36 heads for danger

THE radio call from the Information Room at police headquarters came to the patrol car which Sergeant Walter Egerton was driving through Liverpool's streets one rainy morning at exactly ten o'clock.

Egerton was ordered to go to the mouth of the two-mile long Mersey Tunnel to meet an ambulance coming from Birkenhead, on the other side of the river. Bound for a Liverpool hospital, it was carrying a man needing an emergency brain operation.

Egerton's co-driver, Constable Alan Edwards, acknowledged the message through his hand-microphone: "Car thirty-six. We're on our way. Time 10.00 Roger."

Two minutes later the car was at the tunnel entrance. When the ambulance emerged, Egerton drove in front of it and guided it through the thick traffic of the city centre. From time to time he led it off the main roads, twisting and turning through side-streets to avoid traffic and save time.

The convoy covered the three miles to the hospital in six minutes. At the hospital entrance nurses were waiting to rush the patient to the operating theatre. A doctor said later: "It was touch and go whether the man got here in time. Fortunately he did—and recovered completely."

The ambulance call was the culmination of a succession of jobs for Egerton. In the previous hour he had visited a shop to get information on a burglary, pulled up two motorists to warn them of bad driving, stopped to help a blind man across a road and spoken to some children who darted dangerously into the face of heavy traffic. "That was a busy spell," he recalls, "but we may get as many as fifteen radio calls during an eight-hour duty."

Every year, Liverpool's 120 police car drivers cover almost a million miles of the city's streets and investigate most of the 37,000 messages which are received by the Information Room from 999 callers. Both the mileage covered and the calls answered have steadily risen in the thirty-five years that Liverpool police have been using cars and motor cycles.

Liverpool has consistently pioneered with mobile police. In 1934, only two other towns were using two-way radio in cars, and only Liverpool had equipment for the use of the voice as well as for morse code. Reinforcing the patrol cars and motor cycles today is a "trouble squad" of radio-equipped Land-Rovers, each carrying four policemen and a trained dog, which tour tough areas of the city and have greatly deterred teddy boy gangs. Many foot police also have motor scooters to speed up their work.

On patrol car duty Egerton usually has a co-driver, but this is not always possible. Liverpool has more than 100 vacancies for car patrolmen, and drivers regularly work overtime. Each car patrols one of sixteen city areas, from a square mile to five square miles in size. The inspector and two sergeants who are regularly out in cars, or the inspector running the Information Room, may send any car to help another.

The Information Room is the nerve centre of the car patrols. On its large wall map a red or green light glows in each area, showing whether the car there is engaged or not.

"Sometimes at peak periods—early morning, late afternoon and ten till midnight—every light shows red," says Chief Inspector Albin Clarke, of the Information Room.

LATE one night, Egerton was told to go to a house from which an elderly woman had telephoned. She was in bed and could hear someone moving about downstairs. The house was only fifty yards from where Egerton's car was parked. He drove quietly to the house, the front door of which was open, and then rushed in with his companion. "We found the thief at the sideboard with a box of cutlery in his hands," Egerton says. "He was dumbfounded."

On another occasion, just before midnight, Egerton was in the Information Room. Most of the police were combing the suburbs for Harold Winstanley, a footman who, four hours earlier, had killed two servants with a Sten gun and wounded Lady Derby at her home, Knowsley Hall, near Liverpool. Seeing a telephone operator waving, Egerton went to answer an incoming 999 call. A voice—it was Winstanley's—said: "The Knowsley Hall . . . Harold Winstanley." He was in a telephone box scarcely 600 yards from the Information Room.

Egerton got a patrol car and with two other policemen went to the box. Winstanley was just leaving it, and although he drew the Sten gun from under his coat, the three officers overpowered him. "But for our speedy arrival in the car he might have wandered away," says Egerton.

At his trial, Winstanley was ordered to be detained during His Majesty's pleasure.

Many of the patrolmen's duties are concerned with traffic. Road accidents alone brought in more than 8,000 messages from 999 callers in Liverpool last year.

"We do anything from acting as emergency point duty men to warning motorists about dangerous driving," Egerton says. "Most drivers we stop are very co-operative and we like them to feel that they get a square deal."

Twenty thousand calls answered by car patrols in 1956 were broadly defined as "helping the public." This may mean telling a mother that her son has been killed on the road—or rounding up a flock of stray sheep.

On one occasion a woman travelling to London by coach reached the first stop and telephoned Liverpool police to say that she thought she had left her electric kettle on. Egerton went to her daughter's home, collected a key and opened up the woman's house. The kettle was not on—but he spotted an open window which he latched.

Doctors and hospitals regularly ask patrol cars for help, especially in speeding the supply of drugs. One night Egerton escorted a specialist with some rare drugs, urgently needed for a dangerously ill woman, from the centre of Liverpool to Crosby, a distance of seven miles, in eight minutes exactly.

Other jobs involve children. Egerton has toured back streets looking for missing children and given first-aid to youngsters burned or scalded at home. Traditional children's days increase the number of such calls. One Guy Fawkes night, when the fire service was heavily

patrol cars now answer seven times as many calls as in 1945

Every year Liverpool's flying squad patrols a million miles of city streets. Whether saving lives or fighting crime it's geared to meet trouble at full speed

by HILARY AGATE

overworked, Egerton and Edwards put out seventeen dangerous fires lit by children.

Animals, too, cause work for the patrolmen. Usually they are domestic animals—mad dogs and trapped cats—but Egerton has dealt with a parrot on a roof, a snake in a pub cellar, and a poisonous spider in a banana box.

A 999 call recently took him to a new council housing estate where two cows were roaming. While his companion drove the car slowly, Egerton followed the cows on foot. Despite his efforts to head them off they left a two and a half mile trail of trampled gardens behind them before reaching a main trunk road.

"I tried to lasso them with a rope I'd borrowed," he says, "but I failed." Finally, after darkness had fallen, Egerton and his companion cornered the cows and drove them into a field. Next day, Egerton found that he had put the cows in with a prize herd, whose owner was not at all pleased.

More than 4,500 calls to Liverpool's patrol cars last year concerned criminal offences, and the swift arrival of the cars led to nearly 550 immediate arrests. Many of these calls involved stolen cars—"how we wish drivers would always lock up!"—and patrolmen are looking for half a dozen missing cars in Liverpool every day. Egerton has stopped a stolen car within thirty seconds of receiving a radio call.

The type of crime call to police cars often depends on the time and season. During the winter, housebreaking figures soar, while late Saturday evening throughout the year is the peak time for street disturbances. Recently two Liverpool policemen were attacked by a mob when they tried to stop a fight. A passer-by's 999 call brought a patrol car to the scene in a minute, and the crowd scattered. Even so, one policeman had a broken rib and the other had twenty stitches inserted in face wounds. "It might have been a lot worse had the car not arrived so quickly," says one of the victims.

Some 999 calls are false alarms. "But we want people to ring us whenever they are suspicious," says Superintendent Harold Welsh, of Liverpool C.I.D. "Even the unlikeliest calls may be necessary."

A woman rang one night to say she had seen two men taking a horse into a house. "We thought it was a hoax," says Egerton, "and some neighing went on over the intercomm—but a car went to investigate. Sure enough, there was a horse. Two men had been celebrating, and on the spur of the moment one decided to buy a pony. He led it home, then took it through the front door, hall and kitchen into the backyard."

Egerton, who joined the Liverpool force in 1946, did three years on the beat and then had a rigorous three months' instruction to qualify as a patrol car driver. He clocked 3,000 miles during training, which included classroom work, car maintenance, eight-hour stretches of night driving, 90 m.p.h. speed tests, work in a skid pan, and running commentaries given to an examiner while driving through city streets.

"We look for men of initiative, adaptable to the fast-changing circumstances of patrol work," says Chief Superintendent John Findlater, head of Liverpool Police Traffic Division. "Standards are high, and a skid at the wrong moment during training may mean a man failing the whole course."

Left: An emergency call comes to the telephone room. Then the message is sent to the radio operator on duty. Top: A few moments later, the radio operator, Constable W. Legg, puts the message through to patrol car 36. Right: Egerton and Edwards answer the call. They average three minutes to arrive at the scene of an incident

POLICE drivers must maintain these standards on the job. Before leaving on patrol they carry out a detailed mechanical inspection of their cars. Any accident to a police car entails a full-scale inquiry and a possible driving ban on the man responsible.

"Yet accidents are remarkably rare, considering the speeds at which patrolmen often work," says Findlater. "They are told never to get involved in a crash in order to stop a stolen car unless it is absolutely necessary. Most crashes are not the policeman's fault."

Egerton recently chased a stolen car in which a youth was joy-riding at 60 m.p.h. After a four-mile pursuit, Egerton, driving alone on this occasion, headed through side-streets to cut off the youth, whom two other police cars were now following.

"Finally, I got to a junction ahead of him, and placed my car across the road. The aim was to slow him down, and I left just enough room for him to pass me."

Soon the stolen car, swerving madly, came into view. "For a moment the driver headed for the gap, then seemed to lose his nerve and the car hit my bonnet at about 40 m.p.h. My car was badly damaged, and the speeding car was a complete wreck."

Egerton spent two days in hospital with concussion after the ramming. The youth was in bed longer, but was not seriously injured.

"After all that," says Egerton ruefully, "he had the nerve to complain that police manhandling caused his broken nose." THE END

September Moon

by JOHN MOORE

ILLUSTRATED BY BATCHELOR

Treachery and jealousy, bad weather and disease . . . these could ruin the harvest. But they would not part Tim from Marianne

It was hop-picking time again in Herefordshire, but this year, on two neighbouring farms, the work went on against a background of tension and strain.

At the Hope Farm the strain was caused by shortage of money. Its owner, a lovable but impractical widower named Tommy Tomkins, was bankrupt, but he wouldn't lie down—not unless his puritanical brother, George, who was checking the farm's accounts, decided to foreclose.

Tommy felt that he might yet win through if he could harvest his hops successfully. But the whole crop was menaced by botrytis—a quick-spreading disease that had already blighted other farms.

Botrytis was the bogy, too, at Sollarshill Manor Farm. John Sollars, its starchy, rigid-minded owner, had fallen ill. The whole weight of running the farm, at this critical time, had to be borne by his son, Tim.

The atmosphere on the two farms was not improved by the bitter enmity between Black Herbie's gipsy tribe, hop-picking at the Hope, and Wisdom Lee's lot, working at the Manor. Black Herbie and his cousin had recently given

Inside the tin a burning candle was floating in something that looked like water. Tim dipped his finger into it. "Petrol!"

Wisdom a cowardly beating; the older man was still recovering. . . .

John Sollars's illness came at an awkward time in more ways than one. His son, Tim, found himself so busy that on some days he had no time at all in which to see the girl he was courting—although she lived only a mile away. For Tim Sollars had fallen deeply and suddenly in love with Marianne, the vivacious half-French daughter of Tommy Tomkins. . . .

FINAL INSTALMENT

The Race Against Time

DURING the days that followed, a moister air blew in from the west, and brought a sprinkle of rain. The dampness seemed to revive and rekindle the hop disease. Through the hot spell it had spread only slowly. Now, suddenly, it went like wildfire. There was still no sign of it at Sollarshill or at the Hope; but on the other farms, to the west and to the south, it scorched the hop leaves and withered the bines.

The hop-pickers worked long hours, sometimes from dawn to dusk; it was a race with the botrytis, and John Sollars took on more pickers.

His own sickness lay heavy on him; and he went to his doctor for the first time in twenty years. Mollie, his wife, had threatened that she would phone for the doctor if he did not do so; and he persuaded himself that perhaps there might be some simple explanation of his pain; it might turn out to be something which could be cured by magic pills or potions.

But the doctor wouldn't give him any pills. Instead he spoke of X-rays and a specialist.

"When the hops are in," said John. It would be a little time, in any case, before the doctor could make the appointments; and within a fortnight, John thought, he should have at least three-quarters of his crop safely stored in the long white pockets in the barn. He must get in his hops; and until the hops were gathered nothing else would matter, not even the pain.

He cursed every scud that stopped the picking even for a quarter of an hour; he cursed Tim if a load was late at the kiln, holding up the drying. Each evening he counted the pockets in the barn, which in the half-light looked like the carcasses of pigs hanging up there.

As for Tim, John's mantle had fallen on him; and he drove the pickers as he drove himself, relentlessly. He bullied the Black Country people, cajoled the Welsh, went to see Wisdom where he lay in his caravan, recovering from the injuries inflicted on him by Black Herbie and Black Alf, and took back Wisdom's word to the gipsies when they idled as gipsies always do in the noonday sun.

From breakfast to supper time he never left the hopyard. He had no time to himself, no time even to see Marianne, though he sent her a brief letter through his sister on the Monday morning after the party in the pub.

Carol delivered the letter when she picked up Marianne in Tim's car to go shopping for some dress material in Hereford. Marianne had offered to help her choose the material and make the dress. In Hereford they bought some dark green taffeta and a pattern, and the next evening Carol came over to cut out the dress.

Marianne had suggested they should do it at the Hope; she didn't want to go to Sollarshill, so she made the excuse that it would be easier to work in her room, where they could do the sewing on her own machine.

She loved Carol, and it was fun making the dress after hop-picking every evening. Always Carol brought a brief letter from Tim, and took one back to him. Sometimes Tim phoned, but the letters were better somehow. Twice, in the late evening, Marianne rang him up because he had asked her to. The first time Mrs. Sollars answered. She said: "Are you *quite* sure Carol isn't being a nuisance about the dress? Oh—*Tim*?" She even contrived to sound surprised.

The second time it was John Sollars who picked up the telephone: "Oh, it's you, miss." After that she told Tim she would not ring him up again; and next evening he came over with Carol, for a few minutes snatched between picking and drying.

He'd come straight from the hopyard, in dirty old corduroys and an open shirt. His face and neck were deep-tanned by the sun. "I'm mucky and sticky with hops," he said, "and there's another load on the way up to the kiln."

"Have you had supper?"

"I'll get something when we've finished."

"There's a bit of steak in the fridge. Five minutes." She didn't ask him how he liked it. She fried it very quickly, well browned on the outside, red within.

Tim wolfed it. "Better than at home," he said with cheerful disloyalty.

Then she walked as far as the drive gate with him, and there was no one about, so they kissed in the open there, briefly.

"Friday's your birthday, isn't it?" he asked. "We'll see if we can go somewhere. We ought to be pretty well on with the hops by then. How's it going with you?"

"No disease yet. We're keeping our fingers crossed."

"Uncle George?"

"Relenting a bit. He may give us another chance if we get the hops in safely and pay off his precious interest. . . . Till Friday?"

"Till Friday!" He went off down the hill.

As Marianne turned back to the farmhouse she caught a glimpse of her Uncle George crossing the yard. Something very strange was happening to George. Marianne was heartily sick of him; Tommy could scarcely tolerate his company; but George was oblivious of this and he seemed to become, if not exactly happier, at any rate less miserable as the days went by.

He had been through Tommy's accounts, such as they were. He had given it as his considered opinion that Tommy had been "morally bankrupt" for at least three years. He had lectured him about his fecklessness and about drink. But though his business with Tommy was apparently finished George showed no inclination to return to London and his job at the Ministry of Education.

Most of his days were spent in the company of the two gipsy boys who owned the ferret, and two Welsh boys. He fed them on boiled sweets and devised means of testing their intelligence quotients. His discovery that the gipsy boys were illiterate had at first shocked and then fascinated him. "It opens up," he said, "a whole new field of study. I am thinking of the possibilities with aboriginal tribes. . . ."

THIS had been their worst day so far at Sollarshill: heavy showers in the morning, an hour's steady rain in the afternoon, and towards evening a strike fomented by one of the more troublesome pickers who took advantage of the wet discomfort.

Tim was able to settle the strike. John Sollars, feeling very old and tired, left him to it and stumped back into the house.

To relieve his irritability he asked his wife: "Where's Carol? Over at the Hope again, I suppose?"

"Yes. She goes there every evening."

"I'm not happy about it, Mollie."

"No? I wasn't either; but I've been wondering whether we might have misjudged that girl a little. According to Carol, she makes all her own clothes——"

"She'd go threadbare otherwise."

"And she's an excellent cook."

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Nothing; but somehow it makes her seem less of a—well, what we've always thought her. Anyhow, it's quite clever to make an evening dress."

"I'll say when I see it," said John. "One of those half-naked ones I suppose. . . . I wish Tim hadn't taken up with her. It's time he settled down and thought of getting married."

Then Black Herbie faced her, and in that moment Marianne realized for the first time that he was mad

Mollie glanced up quickly from her darning. "Who were you thinking he might . . . ?"

"There are lots of decent girls," John said grumpily. "I've always thought I'd like him to marry into hops."

"Well, dear," said Mrs. Sollars, "I expect he will." She smiled secretly at her thoughts. . . .

On the following Thursday morning Black Herbie was sitting on the steps of his caravan, and the sun that had been creeping up behind Malvern was bright suddenly over the sepia hills. By its light he examined the hop-sprig in his hand. The leaves were brown and withered; the hops were brownish-red—but carmine when he lifted them up in the rays of the sun.

Holding them so, Black Herbie smiled. That sprig, which he had pulled off a withered bine at the very first light of dawn, represented power. Sloping down the edge of the hopyard, furtive, secret, he had noticed the withering bine. You had to be very clever to notice such a thing; clever to pull a sprig off it so that you could examine it later in the better light.

But Herbie was clever. Wisdom was down, Herbie was up. Soon they would acknowledge Herbie as King of the Gipsies, and he would lord it over them all. With this little sprig he would prove his cleverness; at the very start of hop-picking today, when Mr. Tomkins came down to the hopyard.

Herbie had power. He had only to stretch out his hand and take what he wanted; just as in the

Continued on page 26

THE SECRET INVADERS · 3

by BILL STRUTTON and

Three hours that shortened

One vital fact was unknown, and threatened to hold up D-day. So the Coppists fought a storm in a perilous dash to France—and brought back a piece of rock

Willmott met Prue Wright when she was his driver—and fell in love. He proposed to her in St. James's Park on Christmas Eve

When Robin Harbud became a sub-lieutenant his colleagues held a party. It included a riotous game of rugby in the wardroom

Geoff Galwey accompanied Willmott on a secret invasion exercise in a Scottish bay —and saved him from being drowned

It was 2 a.m. on a night in November, 1943. A freezing wind swept Etterick Bay on the island of Bute. In the middle of the bay, two men were swimming. And above the noise of the waves, one of them called out desperately.

"Geoff!"

His companion, Geoffrey Galwey, swam towards him.

"*Geoff!*" This time the call was more urgent.

With an effort Galwey reached the spot where Lieutenant-Commander Nigel Willmott panted and threshed in the darkness.

"My rubber suit is filling with water," Willmott gasped.

Anxiously he and Galwey scanned the sea around them. They were leader and assistant navigator respectively of a top-secret naval unit named Combined Operations Pilotage Parties (COPP).

This was meant to be a rehearsal for their most difficult and important job yet—swimming to scout the beaches of Normandy prior to the invasion of Europe. But things had gone wrong. Although they had managed to land and examine the "enemy" shore, Willmott had torn a hole in his suit. Now, the midget submarine which was supposed to pick them up again was nowhere to be seen.

Galwey took out his torch, held it high and started to signal with it. "That submarine had better come soon," Willmott said between his teeth. "My suit feels like a ton weight."

"Blow your Mae West up," Galwey urged.

"I can't get at it." Willmott was battling hard enough with his arms to keep afloat.

"Let me try." Galwey felt and tore at the zip flap on Willmott's suit. He groped inside for the Mae West tube. A wave doused them and he kicked strongly with his legs, gulping salt water, then got his mouth to the bladder and blew. Several times the sea put him under, but he managed to inflate the Mae West at the cost of a lot of breath.

He looked around once more. "Damn that sub!" He had to abandon Willmott while he felt in a pocket for one of his emergency signal cartridges. He got it out and tried to fire it by pulling off the teat, but a wave swamped it and it hissed angrily.

Then Galwey felt the icy water coming into his own suit. The cartridge had torn a hole in his sleeve. Hastily he withdrew that arm and held it clear of the waves. Now they were really in a mess. He had only one arm for swimming.

By this time, Willmott had managed to get out one of his own cartridges. He pulled off the top and the signal went up like a star from a Roman candle, casting a great dancing nimbus of rosy light around them. Willmott's Mae West was just keeping his head up above water, but Galwey dared not think what the cold was doing to him. Still there was no sign of the submarine.

Galwey said frantically: "Can you make the beach?"

No answer. Willmott's head was lolling. The waves were going over him. Though he pawed feebly at them, he was nearly unconscious.

The cold had its grip on Galwey. His drenched arm and shoulder were one terrible pain. He knew that if they were left in the sea much longer, Willmott would die. Galwey became powerless to hold his arm out of the water any longer and gave up trying. He fumbled and managed to get his remaining cartridge out. Up shot the light. It glared over an empty sea.

When he had almost given up hope, a light answered. Galwey shouted excitedly: "There's the sub."

Willmott came to life as the crew hauled him on to the submarine's casing. Somehow they got him down into the tiny control room and poured brandy into him.

He submitted, dazed, to being stripped and wrapped in blankets. They got him on to an acid-pitted mattress over the batteries, and he lay there, unconscious again.

Galwey took a wandering lead from the batteries, plugged an inspection bulb into its socket and tucked the glowing lamp inside the blankets to help to warm him. They had been in that sea for almost an hour.

"What a mess!" he said disgustedly, and pulled his own blanket round him. "Imagine doing it off France." Then he, too, passed out. . . .

Willmott had a sharp three-day bout of 'flu. Nevertheless, on the first day of it, when his temperature raged around 103 degrees, he insisted on studying tide and moon tables. Then he sent off a signal suggesting a date for the first Normandy reconnaissance—the dark period starting in the third week of January, 1944.

The beaches earmarked for the invasion were flat and sandy, and looked ideal for the rapid landing of men and vehicles. Yet Combined Operations Headquarters had to be sure that there were no sandbars or other underwater obstructions which could ground and maroon landing craft well out, at the mercy of the enemy guns. The only way to be certain of this was to land Coppists to examine and measure the beaches, as they had done before the invasion of Sicily. Willmott and his men were needed as never before.

The responsibility the Coppists would carry as they wriggled inshore was almost too immense to conceive. Willmott was not the only one awed at the prospect. When the idea of beach reconnaissance was first mooted to staff officers at General Montgomery's 21st Army Group Headquarters, they shied at it. What! Have scouts poke about on the beaches picked for the invasion? Supposing that one of them —just one—was caught? Worse; what if they unknowingly left some clue of their visit and its purpose? The Allied armies *could* land in the jaws of a trap.

Canoeing ashore from submarines, as Willmott and his companions had done with conspicuous gallantry before the invasion of Africa and Sicily, was unthinkable. Apart from the danger from mines, the sea off Normandy was too shallow for ordinary submarines. Therefore midget submarines had been suggested. Known as X-craft, they turned out to be horror chambers—tiny frail cigars whose insides were squalid

MICHAEL PEARSON

the war

and crowded. Pipes and wires led everywhere. The crew of each submarine was cut from four to two, but with three Coppists aboard, there seemed nowhere to put arms and legs. The air soon became foul.

On the day that Willmott rose impatiently from his sick bed, a warrant arrived from the Admiralty giving his unit top priority over all other demands for equipment. After the long, vigorous battles he had waged to get even basic stores—let alone the new and highly specialized gear that was needed—this was indeed a triumph; high-level recognition of the vital rôle he and his men were destined to play.

The tempo of their preparations quickened. They tried out their first crash-dives in the absurdly tiny submarines. And a silent pistol arrived for trials.

Scientists were producing heating equipment to keep Coppists warm during their swims. There was a heating pad designed for wearing inside a rubber suit, but the Coppists found that it either did not work at all, or started a brisk frying process and had to be fished out hastily.

Another heater produced was a tin which stood on the floor of a boat. One of these was shown to the Fourth Sea Lord. "Don't you think I've ever seen a tin of soup before?" snorted his lordship, and pushed it aside.

Later one of his aides opened it up, found a wick inside, and decided to light it. He omitted the essential precaution of first punching a couple of holes. There was a dreadful bang and the whole office was spattered with what looked like blood and guts. When the cleaners came in a rumour swept the Admiralty that the Fourth Sea Lord had been blown up at his desk.

DUE to all their mid-winter swimming the Coppists suffered enormously from rheumatism, colds, lumbago and ear trouble. Willmott himself was far from well. His stomach ulcers were troubling him. Occasionally the pain all but quenched the grim energy within him. On some days it forced him to retreat to his cabin. Since hospital was unthinkable, there was nothing he could do about it—except take pills.

Christmas drew near. It was getting colder every day, but the Coppists continued to operate in Loch Striven and the Kyles of Bute with their X-craft. In addition, they were hard at it doing beach Commando work, practising sentry evasion tricks, ways of killing quietly, learning photo-recce interpretation, studying stereoscopic pictures of the Normandy coast, attending topographical lectures and getting pep-talks on enemy psychology from M.I.9 officers.

A rare moment of relaxation came when young Robin Harbud was promoted to sub-lieutenant. The celebration that followed in the mansion which the unit occupied at the top of Loch Striven goes on record as the noisiest in the hectic history of C.O.P.P. It started off sedately enough with round games and one or two tentative baritones, and warmed up to a game of *Tail End Charlie,* in which several men were hoisted aloft in a settee "aircraft," and there, with much snarling and chattering of "guns," fought off attacks by gleeful rushes of wing-flapping "fighters."

There was rugby in the wardroom after that, and they watched Willmott laying about him in the middle of the mêlée. "The C.O. lends tone to the place, don't you think?" Galwey said.

Out of the scrum came a group of officers

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Silently, Scott-Bowden and Smith slid into the water. Above them, Willmott whispered: "Off you go"

How ironic for Mrs. Slim! She had taught her children so well that now she had become . . .

The woman nobody needed

by STUART CLOETE

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

MRS. SLIM was sixty-five, a small woman who generally wore black. She had had nine children, of whom eight survived. She had sixteen grandchildren and more to come—she hoped. She wore shoes with elastic sides. She had a light hand with pastry and green fingers with her small garden and house plants. "Motherly" was the adjective often applied to her. "A motherly soul," people said.

She had a letter in her hand. Her glasses had slipped down her nose. They need me, she said to herself. They need me. In her mind she saw Sylvia and the children. I'm coming, Sylvia. Mother's coming, she said silently. How often had every mother in the world said it in answer to some cry of distress, pain, fright or just plain loneliness? Coming, darling. Mother's coming. That was the refrain in her mind.

Now the action, the plan. Amelia Johnson would see to things, see that Andries, her house boy, watered the garden, kept the house clean and fed Tommy. Tommy, a big tabby, was the pride of Mrs. Slim's life. Why, he'd taken a prize once. Of course he was younger then. But so were we all, she thought. Now they were older, and the young were grown up, had flown the nest like young birds.

She put on her garden hat—it was a straw burned brown by the sun—and walked down the short drive out through the gate in the plumbago garden hedge, and down the road. What a lovely day it was! The mountains over towards Somerset West were blue in the heat haze.

She turned up Amelia's drive, pushed open the screen door and called: "Amelia, Amelia!" Amelia's hearing wasn't as good as it might be, but she would not use a hearing aid. She just said people didn't talk clearly now. Maybe they didn't. Sometimes Mrs. Slim thought that herself. Some days, that is.

"Ah, there you are, dear," she said.

Amelia said: "Oh, Julia, how nice of you to pop over. You're just in time for a cup of tea."

Julia Slim wondered if she'd ever call, whatever time of day, and not find Amelia ready to have a cup of tea. She said: "I've got to go north."

"Yes, dear. How nice. You can do with a change. Going to visit Sylvia, I suppose?"

"Yes, dear." It was no use telling her the whole story. She would have to shout it. How could she shout: "Fred has been mauled by a lion and is in hospital?" So she said: "I wanted to know if you'd keep an eye on the place—the garden and so on—and see that Tommy gets his meat and milk. I worry about Tommy if I'm not there."

"Of course, dear. You can leave everything to me. When are you going?"

"Tomorrow. I'm flying up to Johannesburg."

"I thought you didn't like to fly? I mean, you never have, have you? Because of your heart, I mean."

"No, I never have. But I must this time." This was not the moment to think of her heart.

"Well, I suppose we are never too old to learn."

"Thank you, Amelia. I knew I could count on you. I must be off now. There's so much to do."

That was that—the house and the cat and the garden were taken care of. She could count on Amelia. Now she must call up Joe Farnell. Joseph Farnell was an old friend and the biggest stockholder in Trans-African Airways. He'd see she got a seat, and wire the Carlton for a room. She'd take a car from Johannesburg. There would be no difficulty.

Joseph didn't fail her. He got her the seat. The flight was comfortable enough and at the end of it Julia found herself installed in a very comfortable room at the Carlton.

How different it was from the old days of forty years ago! The Transvaal, when she had come to it as a girl, had been really wild. She'd known men mauled by lions before. She'd even shot a lion once, when they had been trekking by ox wagon beyond the Limpopo. A pioneer, that's what I was, she thought, as she put her hat on the dressing-table. How one changed. Or did one? She still felt the same.

The hotel porter arranged to get her a car. The drive would take five hours, he told her. Five hours! It would have taken two weeks by wagon.

She did not pay much attention to the trip. There was no interest in it, just being driven along black tarmac roads at fifty miles an hour. There was no game to look at. She just sat with her hands folded in her lap, dreaming of the old days: of Jack Slim, her husband; trader, hunter, prospector—what a man he'd been! What a life she'd led with him!

Jack and the kids. Then he'd passed on and the kids had grown up. Of course she visited them. But until now they hadn't needed her. She needed to be needed.

She began to pay attention to the scenery. They were pretty close. There was the little sugar-loaf kop. Sugar Kop, they called it. There was the windmill and the wall of the dam that gave Fred the water for his irrigated lands.

The driver got out to open a gate. They swept up the drive. The car stopped. She had arrived.

She got out. Sylvia was standing on the *stoep* with the two children at her side. She looked very pretty. The children had changed a lot in two years. Two years was a long time in the life of a child. Timmy was now four, so he had doubled his age—a serious, dark-haired little boy with big brown eyes. Julia, named after her grandmother, was eight, all bubbles and laughter and quick tears.

Mrs. Slim looked at her daughter again—tall and

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The little girl cried out: "Oh—oh, a sn

ke! It bit me." But already old Mrs. Slim was running to her: she had seen the child's face change. She knew the snake was lying curled up under the hen

Dogs on the dollar trail

by FRANCIS HITCHING

Man's best friend is his fortune when foreign kings and film stars pay big money for a well-bred British puppy

Three dogs wait for a plane at London Airport. British-bred poodles are now so popular in America that at least one-third of all visiting American film stars take them home

ON the last day of his recent visit to Britain, ex-King Michael of Rumania decided to buy two pekingese dogs. From his hotel in London he rang up one of the leading breeders, Miss Cynthia Ashton-Cross, of Ascot, Berkshire. He explained that he was leaving on the boat-train in two hours' time.

Miss Ashton-Cross hurriedly chose two dogs, drove to the station, arrived in London by train and went by taxi to the hotel. King Michael had just left. She hired another taxi, drove to Victoria Station, bundled the pekingese under her arms, and ran on to the platform two minutes before the train was due to leave. The ex-King was leaning from a carriage window. She handed the dogs to him. He smiled broadly, said that they were perfect and, as the train pulled out, threw £200 in notes to her. Waving goodbye, he shouted: "Keep the change."

Although the manner of the sale was unusual, the price paid was not. On an average day, twelve pedigree dogs are exported from Britain, and £1,000 upwards is paid about forty times a year for a prize-winning dog of a popular breed. Last year, nearly £1 million was paid for the 4,300 dogs which left this country, making dog-breeding one of Britain's best "backyard" industries.

More than half the dogs went to Americans, who offer almost any price for animals they want. Aubrey Jones, a Montreal buyer, flew to England two years ago with a cheque for £10,000—the price which an American buyer was prepared to pay for a pekingese, Caversham Ku-Ku of Yam, winner of thirty-seven championships in this country. Its owner, Miss Mary de Pledge, of Bracknell, Berkshire, refused the offer because the dog was her special pet. One of the highest known prices was £3,000 for a Yorkshire terrier named Eden Aristocrat, paid by a New York breeder to Bob Barlow, of Coventry. This year a Philadelphia breeder paid £2,000 in one day for ten dogs which were exhibited at Cheltenham Dog Show.

The demand for British-bred dogs has two causes. Since 1873, the Kennel Club has registered the birth of pedigree dogs in this country, and, with a few exceptions, registration is not accepted unless the dog is pure-bred as far back as its great-grandsires and great-granddams. Secondly, few of the 50,000 British breeders own more than a dozen dogs, with the result that they are all cared for individually.

The prize-winning qualities of British dogs overseas justify the high prices paid for them. A £1,000 miniature poodle, Champion Adastra Magic Fame, has won twenty-three prizes for being the best dog of any breed in the show since it was sold to an American in 1954. Out of twenty-three pekingese sold at the rate of one a year to a Belgian woman, eighteen became champions. The value of prize-money at shows is so small—usually not more than £1 for a first prize—that it barely covers travelling expenses. But the puppies of a champion dog are worth at least double those of other dogs, and ownership of several prize-winning dogs enhances the value of all the puppies sold from a kennel.

Of the eighty breeds registered in Britain, the miniature poodle is easily the biggest foreign currency earner; 1,589 were exported last year. Second and third in popularity were 243 pekingese and 196 cocker spaniels.

Like other breeds, poodles are sold mainly to breeders. They have also become fashionable pets. A poodle puppy called Bolshoi was given to the Russian ballet dancer Ulanova when she visited Britain last year. The King of Greece has a poodle. So has the Shah of Persia. One woman in London has made a business out of exporting poodles to Hollywood. She sold two to Cary Grant, who gave a poodle to Princess Grace of Monaco as a wedding present.

THE earliest-known export of British dogs was during the Roman occupation, when mastiffs were sent to the arenas of Rome to fight bears. Queen Elizabeth I made gifts of dogs to visiting kings, receiving gold and jewels in return. By the end of the nineteenth century British hunting dogs were in vogue on the Continent.

Although there were some exports between the world wars—Indian maharajahs were fond of pekingese and cocker spaniels at this time—the spectacular increase began in 1948, when the first Cruft's dog show after the war provided breeders with an international shop window. From 577 dogs exported in 1947, the figure soared to 1,281 in 1948. Since then there has been an annual increase of about 400. Today, one out of every twenty-five pedigree puppies is exported.

Exporting costs vary with the size of the dog. A pekingese puppy can be flown to New York for £12. The fare for a full-grown Alsatian is £65. With each dog goes details of its pedigree and a veterinary surgeon's certificate of health. To cope with the trade, aeroplanes and shipping lines have kennels at the point of departure and hostesses to look after the dogs during the journey. Britain's only woman shipper, Mrs. Jean Clarke, gives dogs a special diet of glucose and white of egg before they travel. Many owners leave instructions for their dogs to be given tranquillizers on the journey.

In spite of the care lavished on them, pedigree dogs travelling overseas have gone astray. This year an American spent 1,000 dollars on a helicopter search for a Bedlington terrier which slipped its lead at Idlewild Airport. When the dog was found eight days later, the owner gave 500 dollars reward to the finder.

An official of the Randfontein mines in South Africa asked for three guard dogs. Two Alsatians and a pekingese were delivered to him. He wrote a letter explaining that a lap-dog had been sent in error and that night he let all three dogs sleep in the mine compound. But when a man broke in the pekingese yapped so loudly that the intruder was quickly caught. When the pekingese had to be returned to its original buyer, the mine official cancelled his order for the third Alsatian, and placed an order for another peke.

THE END

In tomorrow's kitchen there will be an electronic grill and spit in a glass-domed oven. Cooking times will be cut drastically by infra-red radiation

Wizards at work on our future

by Dr. P. E. HODGSON

Tomorrow is the push-button age. The magic of electronics will bring robot shopping and cars that drive themselves

TODAY we can look forward to many of our daily activities being made easier by a whole range of new gadgets which will be developed during the next few years. Some of these gadgets will be made possible by electronics, the rapidly expanding branch of science which gave us radio and television. Others will depend on new materials now being produced, such as textile fibres and metallic alloys. Others, again, will arise from the unique properties of radio-active substances.

Most of these gadgets will have their most economic applications in factories, where they will turn out all kinds of goods with a speed and precision not dreamed of now. But there are others which we are more likely to meet in our daily lives. Shopping, for example, can be made a good deal less laborious than it is today. The supermarkets now appearing in many towns are a step in the right direction. But electronics can make things easier still.

Wherever the demand is sufficient to justify the initial cost, the whole shop can be run on the principle of the automatic chocolate and cigarette machines. The idea is that as the customer enters the shop, she is given a numbered card. Pausing before the first machine, she sees an array of cheeses in a glass case. She decides on a pound of Cheddar, puts her card into a slot in the machine, and presses the buttons marked "1 lb." and "Cheddar." The machine prints this on her card, with the cost, and sends her order and number to the central assembly machine, which puts the cheese aside and makes out the first line of her bill.

The same sort of thing happens at the next machine. Here, perhaps, she decides on half a dozen eggs. At the next she chooses a tin of mustard and a bottle of olive oil and so on. Each time she inserts her numbered card and presses the appropriate buttons.

When she has gone through all the items on her shopping list she goes to the cashier and hands in her card. He presses a button and the central machine delivers her bill already added up. After she has paid, the customer moves along to the receiving counter, where her purchases are waiting, securely packed.

It will not take long to get used to this way of shopping, and it will save an immense amount of the housewife's time. It will also be more hygienic. No longer will food be handled by lots of other people before it is eaten. Shop assistants will mostly have the rather dull job of keeping the machines well supplied with goods from the store. But their work will be less tiring than the present rush to deal with impatient queues.

Such shops will be the exception rather than the rule. The system is best suited to the sale of large numbers of the same sort of article needed in the same form week after week—such as butter and eggs and tinned goods. It is not suitable for selling the kind of article that a customer wants to examine carefully in several different forms before making up her mind. For example, few women would want to buy a hat from a slot machine.

Cooking, too, is likely to become much more automatic. Ovens which raise the temperature to a predetermined level, hold it there until the food is cooked and then switch off, are already in domestic use. Designing a pre-set mechanism to perform any desired sequence of cooking operations would not be very difficult, and more of them are likely to be built into the cookers of the future.

Such shopping and cooking gadgets can be combined in an automatic restaurant, or rather, self-service canteen. Cold foods can be ordered and served as in an automatic shop. Hot foods will take longer, unless the demand is so great that

Here, from a switchboard in the kitchen, the household can be controlled. You may hold television-telephone conversations—or just switch on to see what the children are up to

the food can be cooked and kept hot as, indeed, often happens now. Even if it were necessary to cook the food separately for each customer, this can be done automatically by infra-red rays in a fraction of the time now needed. The infra-red rays penetrate deeply into the food and heat it uniformly throughout, instead of from the surface inwards, as in an ordinary oven. This can cut the cooking time down to a few minutes.

After food, one of man's greatest needs is transport. So much effort has already been spent on satisfying this need that spectacular changes are unlikely. Ships will not change much, except that in a few decades they will run on atomic power and will be safer, cleaner and faster. It is most unlikely that private cars will run directly on atomic energy, because small reactors are very expensive, and are heavy and inefficient.

A great motoring improvement would be possible if a way were found of storing electrical energy without using heavy batteries of relatively low capacity. Then there would be no need for petrol, and the "engine" could be recharged by plugging it into the mains at home. No method of doing this is known at present, but increasing knowledge of the electrical properties of solids may lead to one.

But gadgets of the escalator type, to move people in large numbers over short distances, are certainly on the way. Escalators need not run up or down; they can easily be designed on the conveyor belt principle to carry people on the level. So far, though perfectly practicable technically, it has not often been done because of the cost. But in a large department store a moving belt that will carry the customer from one end of the store to the other in a minute or two is economically justified. People will soon get used to stepping on and off these belts, as they have got used to the ordinary escalator.

The next development might be to have a series of small "cars," each seating a dozen or so people, moving on rollers. These will be more suited to journeys where a large number of people want to go a few hundred yards. An example is the long subway between the Northern line and the Piccadilly line at Leicester Square Station on the London Underground, and there are many other instances on congested travel routes.

The main difficulty about dealing with rush hour traffic on the London Underground is that there is a limit to the number of trains that can be run on the same line. For safety's sake, the signals must be arranged so that no train is allowed to enter a section of line until the train ahead has left it. But suppose there were a continuous train going round and round? This would be no good because the train would have to stop and let people get on and off, and most of the stops for most of the people would be when they were in the tunnel. But the cars-on-rollers idea gets over this difficulty.

It works like this: Instead of rails there is a series of rollers, and the cars are spaced at intervals on them. The rollers in the station move slowly so that passengers can get on and off the cars without difficulty. But directly the cars are clear of the platform they move on to faster and faster rollers until between stations they are travelling at perhaps twenty miles an hour, which is quite fast enough for small distances.

As they near the next station the rollers slow them down, so that when they reach the platform they are again going very slowly. An improvement would be to have the platform itself moving forward at the speed of the train. Then, to get on the train, the passenger must first get on to the moving platform and from there on to the train. Since the train is stationary in relation to the platform, this is easily done.

Systems such as this have been tried out in America and work safely and efficiently. The installation costs are high, so the system is worth while only on short routes that are so congested that ordinary trains cannot cope with the traffic. There is, of course, no question of any such system replacing trains over longer distances, as it would be too slow and expensive. But here and there, over short distances, it may well be used. One is already being considered in New York.

Another travel problem is to choose the best of alternative routes. It is not always good enough to measure the distance on a map and go by the shortest route. Both the condition of the roads and the density of traffic can make the estimate wildly wrong. A hill may be so icy that it is too dangerous to negotiate. A traffic hold-up at a narrow bridge may mean delay. None of these things are known when the motorist starts out, so he has to chance it and hope for the best. He can, of course, telephone the Automobile Association, which will give him the latest information available. But electronics can improve on that.

It is not difficult to arrange for the police or other officials to keep some central road bureau informed of any changes in the road and traffic conditions. Electronic instruments fixed at strategic points on the roads can easily provide continuous reports on traffic density. If this is done, the motorist has only to dial the appropriate telephone number followed by the start and destination of his journey. The machine makes the necessary calculations, taking all the data into account, and tells him in a few seconds the best route to follow. It can even advise him later by radio in his car if anything crops up to make it advisable to change the route.

A system such as this is fairly easy to organize for car or rail journeys because of the few alternative routes. But a more difficult problem faces the captain of a ship or the pilot of an airliner. For them the best route changes from hour to hour with the weather, and in the air the speed and direction of the wind at different heights has to be taken into account. This is just the sort of problem that can be tackled by an electronic computor. All the meteorological data can be fed into it continuously, and when needed the computor will do its mathematical calculations to find the quickest route. Only an electronic computor can tackle such problems fast enough to be of any use.

Over the years an experienced captain has learned how to make a good estimate of the best route by a mixture of guesswork and intuition, and it will be a long time before it is easy to improve on that. But the possibility of tackling the problem scientifically is there and it will be surprising if it is not energetically developed in the future.

One of the most useful gadgets to be found on board ship or in airliners is the automatic pilot. For long stretches of the journey it will keep the liner steadily on a prearranged course. It is possible to combine this with the best course predictor, so that the liner changes course whenever the changing weather conditions make this desirable.

It is conceivable that this could be extended to road transport, though it is unlikely that this will happen for some time. Technically, it is possible to arrange a row of small radar reflectors along the centre of each vehicle lane on main roads, and have a transmitter and receiver on the front of each car. Then the radar receiver can be coupled to the steering of the car in such a way that whenever the reflected beam shows that the car has moved out of the centre of its lane the steering wheel is altered to bring it back. In this way a car can be made to follow automatically all the twists and turns of the road in perfect safety. The radar set will also detect vehicles or pedestrians in front of the car and alter the speed and direction accordingly.

Complications arise at crossroads, but these can be replaced by fly-overs and cloverleaf crossings designed so that traffic streams never cross. There is no difficulty in setting the automatic steerer so that when it comes to a certain crossroad it turns to the right. Indeed, instructions for the whole journey could be fed into the automatic steerer before the start, and the passenger could relax and let the car get on with it—perhaps also feeding in instructions about being awakened at the end of the journey.

All this is unlikely ever to be realized in its complete form, because the electronics needed are really formidable, and it is cheaper to hire a chauffeur. But if the badly needed straight roads across country to link major cities are ever built, a system of automatic control may well be worth while on them. In general, the machine wins on the long, easy journeys where fatigue is the main difficulty, while manual control is by far the best on short, complicated journeys.

After transport, one of man's chief needs is to be able to communicate rapidly with other people, both for business and pleasure. The telephone, radio and television are with us already, but even in this field there are new gadgets on the way.

One likely development is the application of television, on a closed circuit, to business meetings. Senior executives, who may be working in widely separated offices, frequently need to confer with one another to make routine decisions. Some of this can be done by telephone and letter, but where several people are involved a mutual discussion is essential. At present the only solution is for the executives to spend much of their time and a good deal of their energy in railway or aeroplane journeys. Television can make this unnecessary, except on very rare occasions, by enabling any number of executives to confer together without moving from their desks.

Each needs to be equipped with a television camera to take his picture and to relay it to all his colleagues. In return, he receives a similar set of pictures, displayed on a screen in front of him. Everyone taking part in the meeting can, therefore, see all the others and hear what they say. After a little practice, meetings can be held almost as if all those taking part were in the same room.

There are even some advantages over the usual procedure. The chairman can call a long-winded speaker to order without anyone else knowing he has done so, thus saving him a certain amount of embarrassment. And if the speaker refuses to be called to order he can be faded out with the flick of a switch.

Such a television-telephone system can provide an efficient and time-saving method of business discussion.

The expense is fairly reasonable, and the necessary equipment may well pay for itself in a few years through the journeys it saves—to say nothing of the extra work the executives would be able to do instead of sitting in trains and aeroplanes.

The mechanical translator is another gadget already operating with some measure of success. This is essentially an electronic computor that is able to replace a word it reads in one language by its synonym from another language, taking the synonym from a built-in store. At the cost of a little complication it can be made to take account of simple rules of grammar and even of idiomatic expressions. It can read a typed text electronically and type out the translation. The translated passages are, naturally, devoid of all literary merit, but they can be easily read by a person familiar with the second language but not with the first. This is valuable for translating scientific articles, for example, but it is useless for translating poetry.

Electronics can also help to reduce the cost of long distance telephone calls. At present the caller in London who wants to make a call to, say, Manchester, has to wait if all the lines are engaged. But maybe the lines from a third city or town to both London and Manchester are open. If the operator knew this he could connect the caller at once by the longer route. With manual operation it soon becomes too complicated to take all the possible combination lines into account, but an electronic device can do it without difficulty. This makes it possible to handle more calls over the same system with less delay and with consequent saving of time and cost.

In fact, when all the telephones become automatic in this way, it should not be difficult to arrange for long-distance calls to be dialled in the same way as local calls, perhaps at the same cost. THE END

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by STUART CLOETE

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BEGINNING IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

EGOTISM—I

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HEMOTABS

The woman nobody needed

Continued from page 18

composed, very much the young, happily married woman. She's taking it well, she thought.

Sylvia said: "How nice of you to come and surprise us!"

She shouldn't have been surprised. She should have known Mother would come.

"How's Frederic?" Julia asked.

"Fred? He's fine. Another ten days and he'll be back. I hope you're going to stay a long time, now that you're here."

Sylvia hoped she'd stay! Mrs. Slim felt her protective instinct wilt. The heat began to oppress her. It had all been such a rush, and it was only a false alarm after all. She was not needed here.

Nobody needed her now. And suddenly she realized that what people wanted most of all was not to be rich, or important, but just to be wanted.

They had tea. Revived by it, Mrs. Slim became the bustling grandmother again, a woman as curious as a fox terrier, her nose in everything; in every cupboard, every storeroom.

The medicine chest was well stocked with epsom salt, aspirin, chlorodyne, permanganate, iodine, eye lotion; something for earache, for toothache, bandages, adhesive tape; a snake-bite outfit. She opened that and checked the dates on the serum ampoule. It was still good, and would be for another six months. But there should have been two ampoules.

The hypodermic worked. There was a tourniquet, and also a small folding scalpel.

She ran her hands over the furniture, over the tops of cupboards, and looked at her fingers. Clean. Sylvia was a good housewife, just the way she had taught her to be.

She went out to the back. Sylvia was feeding her hens. The poultry ran free by day, but were put in the henhouse at night because of the jackals and other vermin. There were also half a dozen tame cows for the house—for milk and butter—and two riding horses, a bay and a grey.

"When I was a girl I rode a lot," Mrs. Slim said.

"The big bay is Fred's," Sylvia said.

"He ought to be comfortable," Mrs. Slim said, looking at his shoulder. He was a beautiful horse.

"He is, if you can ride him." Sylvia laughed.

Sylvia drove the car very nicely. She was confident in the car with Sylvia, which was more than she was with lots of people.

"We'll drive over to Springfield this evening," Sylvia said. "You'll like the Glendenings."

"They're new here?"

"Sort of. But they've got a nice place. Been here two years or so. And tomorrow we'll go over and see how Fred is. We'll phone him after dinner tonight. That's the best time. The line will be freer then."

Mrs. Slim thought how wonderful it was to have a telephone on a farm, even a party line—such a convenience. In her day they had to send a boy with a letter. And a refrigerator, too; really, it was like living in town.

Then she looked out over the veld. But that hadn't changed much. The real Africa didn't change. Fred had been mauled, hadn't he? Of course the lion had come out of the reserve, but it was still a lion. Of course they had penicillin and sulfa drugs now, but the menace was still there. All *this*—in her mind she included the pretty, villa-like homestead—was just frills, just a loose cover thrown over reality.

She looked at the sky. There was going to be a storm. She could feel it. You felt taut, nervous, before a storm. In the Transvaal a storm was a great event.

She said: "There's going to be a storm."

Sylvia said: "There was nothing about it on the wireless. Besides, we don't get storms at this time of year. Have you forgotten that?"

Mrs. Slim said nothing. She just sniffed. Radios, refrigerators, telephones, cars—what was the world coming to . . . ?

She liked the Glendenings. He was a doctor who had retired. She found they had mutual friends—old-timers that he had doctored for everything from pneumonia to d.t's.

There was a drift, or ford, about midway between the two houses. It was dry now, of course. There was very little water in the river. Later in the winter, Sylvia said, it would dry up completely.

When they got home, Sylvia said: "I think you were right, Mother. I've looked at the glass. It's dropping."

Right? Of course she was right.

It got darker. Great clouds swept up into the evening sky, blotting out the falling sun. They were red-edged with the light behind them.

They put the children to bed together—bathed them, listened to their prayers and tucked them up. There had been a little argument over the procedure. Sylvia did it by the book. There was no playing and cuddling. The children didn't have toys to float in their bath. There was no doubt about Sylvia being a good mother, devoted to the children, but——

Mrs. Slim never developed the "but" in her mind. She did not want to. "I suppose I am old-fashioned," she said.

Times had changed. But had they changed that much? Had Africa changed the way people seemed to think it had? Her talk with Doctor Glendening had brought back the old days, the old, dead faces. She smelt the smoke of the camp fires again, heard the wagon wheels roll and crash over the stones of the veld, heard the lions roar and the hyenas sobbing in the night.

Mrs. Slim looked at the glass—twenty-nine, and still falling.

After they'd had dinner, the wind came roaring down upon them, in great gusts that struck the house like blows from a fist. And then the thunder followed.

"I wish it would rain," Sylvia said. "I hate dry storms."

"So do I," her mother said. As soon as it rained, the whole galvanized-iron roof became one great conductor, with the water pouring from it to the ground.

The lightning showed through the curtains in spite of the brightly-lit room. Then the rain came sweeping up to the house on the wind.

Then there was another crash and the lights went out. Probably the telephone was out of order, too. They would not be able to phone the hospital tonight.

Sylvia said: "The children, I must get to the children."

Her mother heard her push the chair back. "Wait a minute," she said. "I've got a candle here."

"Where?"

"In my bag." She was feeling under her. "I thought something like this might happen, so I brought a candle and some matches from my room."

She lit the candle and held it over her bread plate to drop the wax that would hold it firm. Then they went to the children. They had slept through it all.

Sylvia said: "What a good thing they got so tired running about at the Glendenings'!"

Julia said: "The river will be up."

"Yes, but it will run down in a couple of days. It's only in the summer we have any real trouble. . . ."

THE thunder stopped about midnight, but the rain went on. It rained all the next day. The garden and yard were flooded. Then, at about teatime, it stopped and the sun came out. They put on Wellingtons and went out.

"I'm going to have a look at my hens," Sylvia said.

They went to the henhouse. The hens were wet and bedraggled.

"There won't be many eggs," Sylvia said..

"I'll look, mother," little Julia said. "Let me look, I love collecting eggs."

"Even when the hens peck at you?" Mrs. Slim said.

"Oh, I'm not afraid of a hen, granny."

To show how brave she was, the little girl slid her hand under a hen in a nest box. Then she screamed: "Oh—oh, a snake! It bit me!"

Mrs. Slim had known what it was before the child screamed. She'd seen her face change. She'd thought Sylvia ought to have taught them not to put their hands under a hen that was laying or brooding, especially after rain. She knew that the snake had got into the warm hay that lined the box.

Snakes hated the cold and the wet. They would crawl up and lie beside a sleeping man. There was Piete Grobler, who had been killed by a puff adder doing that in the Zoutpansberg, that time they were at Mara in 1915.

All this went on in her mind, pictures from the past, memories, thoughts, as she snatched up a broom that stood in the corner, caught the red hen by the neck and pulled her, squawking, from the nest. A yellow cobra like a thin, ochre-coloured ribbon raised itself up with expanded hood. She struck it and broke its back. Then she snatched the child. "Quick," she said, "the serum."

In her mind she saw the nickel-plated box in the bathroom, remembered the date on the ampoule. There ought to have been two, she thought again. Everyone should have two. They must have used one or given it away. But she hadn't wanted to say anything. Sylvia had said she interfered when she had been here before, two years ago. That was why it was two years.

Half carrying the child, they ran into the house, through the lounge, down the passage and into the bathroom.

"Take her to your room, Sylvia," Julia said. "I'll get the snake-bite outfit." She found the box—she could have found it in the dark—and went into the bedroom.

"This will hurt, Julia," she said.

She opened the folding scalpel and cut a cross on the child's finger. The little girl stood white-faced as her grandmother put the finger to her mouth and sucked out the blood and poison. Then Julia put potassium permanganate into the wound. The small purple crystals melted in the blood, darkening it. Next she tied a string below the bite, and she got out the syringe. She said: "It's been sterilized, I hope?"

Sylvia said: "Yes, mother." She had the ampoule in her hand.

The little girl tottered. She was going to faint. Her mother put out her hand to steady her. The ampoule fell on the concrete floor and broke.

"My God!" Sylvia said. "What'll we do now? Get her to a doctor! We must——"

"How?" her mother said. "You can't telephone. You can't get a car across the ford in this flood."

Africa was rearing its head like the cobra in the nest box. All the modern

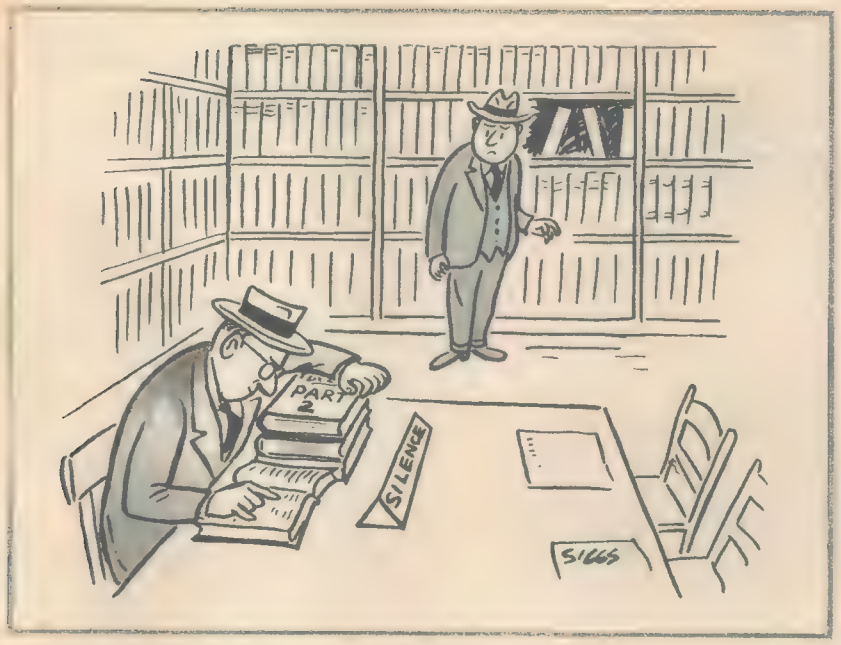
Lighthouse

by FALLON WEBB

Between me and a moonless sky
The eye of light revolving flings
Its absolute assurance through
The doubt of darkness. As it swings

Across the bay, martello tower
And pine-tree spring from nothing, clear
In revelation's flash, and then
Dissolve in emptiness. O here

Watching, I think how a steadfast beam
From eyes of love can cleave the gloom
Of man's despair and light with hope
Courage's unsuspected plume.



conveniences that made life so comfortable when everything was going right weren't worth anything now.

"Then what——?"

"If we can't get her to the doctor, we must get a doctor to her," Mrs. Slim said.

"How, Mother? The phone—the car——"

"Horses," her mother said. "I'll ride over to Glendening's."

"Ride!"

Her mother said: "Call the boys, tell them to saddle both horses." After Sylvia had done so, she said: "What's his name?"

Whose name, Mother?"

"The bay's, you fool." Didn't the girl realize what she was going to do—that she must ride the bay and lead the old grey? She'd never be able to manage the bay unless she rode him; and, to coax him into that torrent, she must know his name.

"Fred calls him Gunner," Sylvia said.

"Put Julia to bed," Mrs. Slim said.

Things were in her grasp now. There was something to do. She went to the front of the house. The horses were there, ready. She went to the old grey and ran the stirrups up in the leathers. Then she measured the bay's leathers against her arms and readjusted them. While she stood beside him, she talked to him, repeating his name again and again. "Gunner," she said, "Gunner, we're going for a ride, you and I."

"Can you manage him, Mother?" Sylvia called from the bedroom.

"We'll soon see," she said. How long was it since she'd been on a horse? Thirty years. More than thirty.

"Bring a box, Solomon," she said.

The boy brought one and held it. She hitched up her skirt. She had on thick white rayon bloomers. She put her foot in the stirrup and swung up. The horse stood well for her. The single rein was in her hand. "Give me the mare's reins," she said. Then she touched the bay with her heels and swung him towards the river. A boy ran to open the gate.

Mrs. Slim felt the horse's life running into her from his flanks, through the saddle into her thighs. She felt it from the bit in his mouth. There was something wonderful in seeing the world again from the back of a horse. She seemed to feel her husband at her side.

I must go upstream a long way above the ford, before I go into the water, she thought. The grey led easily.

Now she was riding upstream along the flooded bank. On the far side there was heavy bush. She turned toward the brown, swirling water.

"Now, Gunner," she said. "Now boy."

He was in, fighting the current. The two horses were swimming side by side. *If I were younger,* she thought, *I'd slip off and hold his mane, but I couldn't get back on to him if I did.*

She was glad she was small and that he was so strong. The water came up to her waist. They were being swept downstream, but they were crossing. She could see the ford coming. There was a big dead tree there that she recognized.

She pulled on the rein, turning Gunner more directly to the shore. "It's there or nowhere," she said to him, stroking his neck.

He was swimming strongly. They were nearly there. They were there. The horse's feet touched the ground.

Now, she thought, *only a couple of miles more,* and pushed the horses into a gallop. She was almost laughing with relief, with happiness at having made it. *What a sight I must look,* she thought.

Her neat villa with its plumbago hedge, Tommy, her cat—all her life was gone. It had faded away. This was reality. She was living again.

She had no worries now. Glendening was an old-timer. He would be able to ride, not like so many young men who could only drive cars. Going back would be easy. The horses would want to get home. They'd get into the water higher up and come down with the current again. With the first aid she'd given the child, he'd be able to save her.

She pulled the horses up at the house. Doctor Glendening was out and at her side before she could speak.

"Snake bite," she said. "Julia."

"I'll get my bag," he said. He was back in a moment with a haversack over his shoulder. He let down the grey's stirrups and was up.

It was a relief not to be leading any more. The horses took to the water easily this time. No nonsense. When they got to the house, the doctor slipped to the ground and ran on in.

Released, the mare shook herself and walked off toward the stables.

Mrs. Slim sat frozen on her horse. *My heart,* she thought. It was pounding in her bosom. It was hurting her; like a knife being driven into her.

Solomon was watching her. She managed to call him. He got to her in time to catch her as she fell.

She thought: *What a good thing my heart held out so long!* Long enough to be of use. That was what mattered—being of use.

That was what Jack had always said—be of use. That was the way she had lived. It was a good way to die. . . .

She lay slack in Solomon's arms. "The old missus is dead," he said. "Ja, she is dead, but she brought the doctor."

He held her respectfully. He was one of the old kind. In his heart he felt that she had died like a warrior in battle.

THE END

A new adventure novel by Stuart Cloete begins in JOHN BULL next week. For details see page 22.

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September moon

Continued from page 15

blackness before dawn he had stretched out his hand, through the door of the henroost, heard the sleepy clucking, felt the scaly cold legs, taken. . . .

A little breeze ruffled the grass. Among the grass something fluttered. It caught Herbie's eye. He watched the wind turn it over, the tiny speckled thing. He called through the door of the caravan: "Sue!"

His daughter came out, half-dressed still, the naked bird in one hand, in the other the little knife she'd been using for drawing it.

"Come here."

Betsy, his wife, called from within the caravan: "What's the matter?"

"Come here, Sue," said Herbie again. He pointed. "Look." The wind, still blowing gently, stirred the speckled feather.

"Pick it up."

Sue looked fearfully up at him. Then she put down the bird on the steps of the caravan and went slowly towards the feather. When she had picked it up Herbie said: "There's another."

She went on a few paces and found it. "Another" said Herbie. "Just in front of you." She had to go down on her hands and knees to find that one. At last there were no more, and she came back to the caravan.

At the step she leaned down to pick up the bird. Herbie pounced at her then. He caught her by the arm and twisted it behind her back. "In," he said. She went into the caravan before him. Betsy looked up, startled; she was drawing the other bird.

Herbie said: "I told her to pick up all the feathers."

He tightened his grip on Sue's arm.

"Lazy little bitch!" He struck her hard, with his open hand, across the shoulders. "Take that; and that." The blows came in swift succession; almost rhythmical; they were loud in the little space. Sue did not cry out at all. Betsy cowered in a corner.

"Teach you!" Herbie cried. He let go of Sue's arm, and she reeled across the caravan. Black Herbie strode out into the sunlight. He picked up the little hop-sprig where he had dropped it. He held it up to the sun again; the hops were red as blood. He saw Black Alf, sleepy, with an armful of wood, outside the next caravan. He shouted to him: "Herbie's the kiddie! Herbie's the boy . . . !"

HERBIE and Betsy had gone up to the hop-picking. Herbie had called terribly through the door of the caravan: "Come, Sue!" and she had said she was just coming. But they had gone without her, and she still lay on the bed face-downwards.

After a little while she went across the caravan to get her dress. She pulled it on and did her hair. Now there was no one in the meadow save a child of Black Alf's playing with a lurcher dog.

Sue became busy suddenly; she ran about the caravan collecting her things. There was a doll she had had as a child. She added it to the pile, simply because it was hers; then, taking a last look round the caravan, she found the tobacco tin into which Herbie sometimes put some money, to pay for bread and milk from the farm. There was six and threepence in it, which Sue put into her bag.

She went to the window again and saw Mr. Tomkins's girl coming through the gate at the bottom of the hop-yard. Sue watched her as she strode fast and purposefully across the meadow towards the caravan. She supposed she'd come to look for those chickens. Well, let her find them.

She wanted something to put her things in and her eye fell on the old sheet which she'd spread on the ground to catch the feathers in when she plucked the birds. It was lying in the corner, where she'd put it down. Sue carried it to the door of the caravan. She shook it, and all the feathers blew out, a shower of them flying away on the wind. Some fell in the grass, and others floated gently for quite a long distance, so that when at last they came to earth they made a trail of feathers leading towards the caravan.

Sue took some pleasure in this. Then she laid out her belongings on the old sheet, tied them into a bundle, and tucked it under her arm.

Marianne, coming over the meadow, was more than a hundred yards away. Sue jumped down off the step and began to run, down to the river, along the path beside it, into the lane.

Marianne hadn't seen Sue leave the caravan. She didn't notice her until she was nearly at the gate into the lane. She ran like a fox, Marianne thought, stopping now and then as if she listened for the pursuit.

A moment later, approaching the caravan, Marianne saw the first of the feathers in the grass. She followed the trail to the caravan door.

She had guessed right. There had been no eggs this morning when she went to collect them; otherwise perhaps she wouldn't have counted the hens. They hadn't been laying well, but they shouldn't have stopped so suddenly, in mid-September.

The hen-house door was open, but Tommy often left it open; there were two hens missing, and when she told Tommy he said at once: "That blessed fox."

But Marianne knew that a fox wouldn't take just two of the hens and leave the others unharmed; unless it were disturbed suddenly, it would kill the lot, and later carry one or two away.

"Two-legged fox!" she said.

"The gipsies?"

"I bet. Anyhow, I'm going to see."

Now, triumphant, she went back to the hopyard. She was determined to make Herbie bring back the fowls.

All the gipsies were standing together at the end of one of the hop-rows. They were in a circle, with Tommy in the middle of them, so that Marianne wondered whether Tommy had somehow found out about the theft of the hens and had tackled Black Herbie with it. But now she saw that there were others with the gipsies.

Mr. Roberts, the old miner who was spokesman for the Welsh pickers, was with them, and Marianne pushed her way through the gipsies and stood by him. Tommy was face to face with Black Herbie, and he was blinking in his embarrassed way.

"But if we picks quick, extra quick, even now we may save 'em," Herbie was saying. "We got a good boss and we knows it. We won't let you down." He spoke over his shoulder to the gipsies behind him. "What do you say? We won't let a good boss down."

The gipsies chorused: "Won't let him down."

"A terrible thing is the downy mildew," said Herbie. "Goes like wildfire when it catches hold. We'll need to pick real hard, no time off for dinner, no time off for tea. We won't let Mr. Tomkins down."

"No!" shouted the gipsies, and Marianne saw that this was a prearranged chorus; obviously Herbie had rehearsed the gipsies in their parts.

Tommy said: "Well. Thank you," and there was a rather odd little silence while Herbie twirled a hop-spray round in his fingers. At last he spoke, half to Tommy and half to the gipsies, softly, as if he were thinking aloud.

"O' course, picking so hard, without dinner or tea—picking all day, picking late—that'd be worth a bit more than one and four a bushel? But we've got a good boss, and he'll *see* as it's worth more to us, worth one and eight, worth one and nine maybe. . . ." He raised his voice suddenly and spoke directly to Tommy. "Worth one and nine to you, Mister, to save your crop as is withering before your eyes?"

Blinking hard, Tommy said mildly: "Hey, come off it, Herbie! You can't take advantage of us like that."

"One and nine," said Herbie. "You was always a good boss. One and nine."

Tommy shook his head.

"Or else we strike," said Herbie.

Marianne put her hand on Mr. Roberts's shoulder and squeezed by him. Tommy hadn't seen her until now. He thought she'd only just come.

"Black Herbie's shown me some disease in the hops at the edge of the hopyard," he said. "Yes, it's downy mildew. Naturally we need to pick in a hurry. But he's asking——"

"Yes, I heard." She raised her voice a little. "Herbie sees we're in a jam so he wants to make a better bargain for himself. But we're not going to bargain with a thief."

THERE was a sudden quick stirring among the gipsies, and Black Herbie took two paces towards her.

"Yes, a thief," Marianne said.

He screamed at her then, and she saw Mr. Roberts step forward out of the crowd, as if he thought Black Herbie was going to strike her. Tommy had come to her side. But she wasn't afraid of Black Herbie. She was much too angry to be frightened.

"Where are the hens, Herbie?"

He didn't answer. Some of the gipsies, she noticed, were already beginning unostentatiously to creep away.

Marianne glanced at Tommy. He looked bewildered and embarrassed, but he gave her a nod as if to say: "It's your show, you can do what you like."

She spoke again to Black Herbie.

"You'll bring back the hens," she said. "Otherwise we'll get the policeman to search your caravan, and you'll go to prison, I dare say. But we won't get the policeman if you bring the hens to the farm in ten minutes' time. We'll pay you off, and you'll clear out."

Black Herbie faced her for a moment, and in that moment for the first time she realized that he was mad. She watched his fists opening and shutting, and as her anger went she was at last a little frightened, and glad of Tommy's hand on her arm.

One of the Dudley pickers laughed. Then all the Dudley people were laughing; and Black Herbie, who had been so fierce and bold, was abject all at once. He turned on his heel, and Betsy followed him as he pushed through the crowd.

"Thieves!" shouted someone; and the Dudley people and the Welsh all took up the cry: "Thieves! Thieves!" with Marianne joining in as Black Herbie shambled down the hop-row, looked behind him, and broke into a run as the cry was repeated and reinforced by more mocking laughter. . . .

George was not a witness of the shame of Black Herbie; nor did Nat and Dan see the disgrace of their father. The three of them, with Dai and Evan, were on their knees halfway into the hedge on John Sollars's side of the boundary fence.

The ferret had been introduced into a rabbit hole—myxomatosis had not destroyed all the county's rabbits—and Dai's longdog stood quivering and whimpering. George's middle-aged

A MEAL TO REMEMBER

by BEBE DANIELS

I WENT to Italy in 1944 to entertain British and American troops, and stayed for a time at the same camp as my friend, General Ira Eaker, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces.

A few weeks after I had arrived, Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia paid a brief visit and I was invited to a dinner given by General Eaker in his honour. Tito brought an entourage of eight, which included two bodyguards, each carrying a submachine-gun. It was explained to us that Marshal Tito had just escaped from a serious attempt on his life.

Unfortunately, nobody remembered to explain to our guests that the electricity system was such that one generator had to be switched over to another at a certain time each evening. This meant darkness for half a minute while this was done.

I was sitting between Tito and General Eaker. We began with consommé and then came fried chicken. I was thrilled when I saw that we were going to have with this a typical American dish of sweet potatoes, mashed, spiced with cinnamon and covered with melted marshmallow.

I was just trying to explain in broken Serbo-Croat to Marshal Tito that I hoped he had a sweet tooth when the lights went out.

When the lights went on again the two bodyguards were standing with their machine-guns pointed directly at General Eaker's chest. (I fancied at the time that one of them was not aiming very well and was pointing towards me.) A dog stood ready to pounce on the first person to move.

When the situation was explained everybody apologized to everybody else, but I must admit that when I took up my knife and fork again my hands were very unsteady.

Here is BEBE DANIELS'S recipe for sweet potatoes and marshmallow

You will need: Sweet potatoes (tinned ones may be used), cinnamon, salt, marshmallow, butter, treacle.

Boil the potatoes until tender. Peel, mash and put through a sieve, add salt and pepper. Grease an oven dish (use butter) and place a layer of potato on the bottom, putting thin pieces of butter on top and sprinkling with cinnamon and treacle. Then another layer of potato and repeat, until there are four layers, finishing with potato. Cover with enough marshmallow to melt and spread thinly over the top. Heat in oven until the marshmallow is browned.

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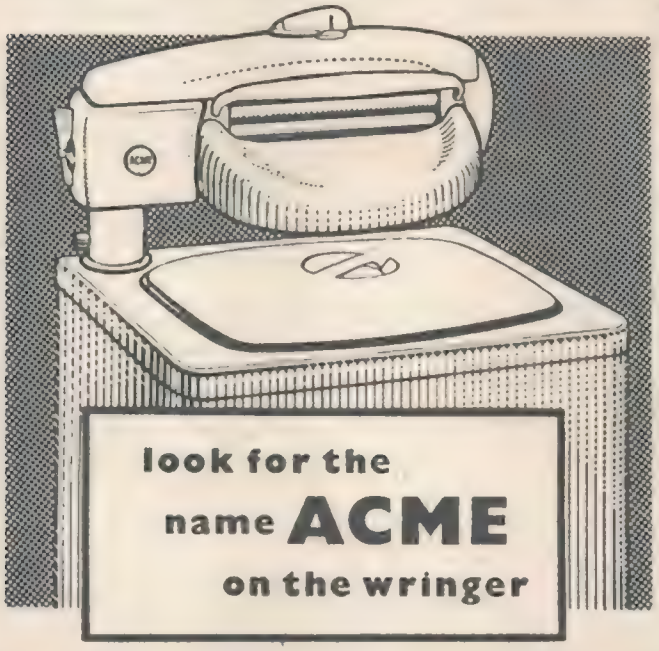

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knees were prickled by unkindly thorns.

Suddenly Dan shouted: "He's coming!" But it was only the ferret, yellow-brown and smeared with the red earth.

Somebody else shouted: "Hey, you!"

Four pairs of eyes simultaneously looked to George for leadership. Dan whispered: "Farmer!" and popped the ferret into George's pocket.

A voice said: "What the devil are you doing?"

The Permanent Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Education backed out of the hedge upon his hands and knees. He stood up and turned to Tim Sollars. He said: "Good morning."

"This is our land, you know, and the kids break down the fences," Tim said. "What *were* you doing?"

There was a violent twitching in George's pocket. He sensed that the ferret was about to escape. It was probably half-way out already, for Dan was tugging at his sleeve. He said evenly: "We were looking for a ball."

He heard a tiny breath, emitted by four small boys. He put his hand down and felt a furry head which caused him profound revulsion. He shoved the head down into his pocket.

Tim's eyes twinkled. He said: "Well, please don't tear down the fence looking for it."

He turned away and at that moment George felt the little teeth sink deep into his fingers. He uttered no sound but took out his hand and stared at the blood that dripped from it.

George said: "Don't be alarmed, children. He just nipped me. It's nothing at all."

When Tommy returned home that night, after an unpleasant visit to his bank manager which, in turn, had led him to visit several inns to drown the memory, George was in the sitting-room swathed in a dressing-gown. In his hand was a glass of Tommy's apple-jack; his bandaged finger stuck out awkwardly.

"I had a little accident . . . with a ferret," he explained, as if it was quite a common thing to have accidents with ferrets. "And my finger was throbbing so I couldn't sleep. Marianne looked at my finger—she doesn't think it's actually poisoned—and then. . . ."

It occurred to Tommy that George was extraordinarily talkative.

"She gave me a glass of this stuff you made out of apples," George went on. "It has a curious flavour, but pleasing when one gets used to it. Why didn't you tell me you'd invented it? It might have great commercial possibilities." He nodded three or four times and repeated, "Great commercial possibilities," very solemnly. "I imagine," he said, "that one could describe it as a teetotal drink, by stretching a point, couldn't one?"

"By stretching a point, undoubtedly," said Tommy. "Let's drink to Marianne—it's almost her birthday."

And while Tommy was opening another bottle of applejack, George shyly put an envelope into her hands. When she opened it she found a cheque for five pounds. Touched, she kissed his cheek and was struck by his rather odd smell.

"Uncle," she said, "haven't you put something special on your hair?"

"Fancy you noticing it, my dear." He seemed quite unaware that he stank like a badger. "It *is* something rather special. Have you ever noticed that gipsies never go bald?"

She hadn't, but now she realized that she had never seen a bald one, nor even one who was a little thin on top, like George.

"One of my young friends told me the secret," said George.

"What is it?"

"Hedgehog oil. Dan got it from his mother. I thought I'd try it."

Shortly afterwards, he yawned and got to his feet. "Well, I must be off," he said. "The children are calling for me early. We are going to look for caterpillars."

He went out, leaving Tommy and Marianne staring at each other. George's metamorphosis seemed complete. . . .

At three o'clock on Friday afternoon

the sun came out of a cloudy sky, dispelling hours of rain. Simultaneously Tim's car arrived and Marianne, in that first blink of the sun, ran out of the house at the sound of the engine.

He had rung her up at breakfast-time to wish her many happy returns. Now he got out of his car and gave her her birthday kiss, a kiss hugely possessive in broad daylight that said *You-be-damned* to anybody who might happen to be watching. He was urgent and excited.

"Come on. I've got something I want to show you."

They drove to Sollarshill Farm where Tim hustled her out of the car and into the field below the hopyard where the gipsy caravans stood. Tim was still in a hurry; he almost pulled her along.

He wouldn't tell her what he was going to show her; but as soon as she saw Wisdom sitting on the step of his caravan, and saw him turn his head

EGOTISM—2

Every man loves and admires his country because it produced *him*.

Bulwer-Lytton

to call Marta out, she knew that the gipsies had been expecting them. She couldn't guess why, and when she glanced at Tim, questioning, he only said: "Wait and see."

Hand in hand they went towards the caravan as Marta and old Mami came out of it. Wisdom stood up and took off his cap; Mami's grubby bandage was still on his head. Marta gave a little curtsy to Marianne.

"The birthday lady," she said.

Mami hobbled up and said: "What's twenty-one? A chit of a child! You wait till you're a hundred-and-two like me." She looked hard at Marianne, and her little face cracked into a toothless grin. "A chit of a child to send Black Herbie packing!"

Marianne wondered how they knew about Black Herbie; but the gipsies had their own ways of hearing things.

"He's off back to the Forest," said Marta. "With all his folk."

"All except his darter!" crackled Mami. "She's left him, so we hear tell."

"He's off," said Marta again, and gave Wisdom a long glance. Marianne thought she knew what Marta was thinking: Wisdom was King of the Gipsies still.

"See," said Mami, and stretched a brown paw towards the village below. The sun glinted on the roofs of caravans drawn up in front of the Royal Victoria. It was astonishing that the old woman could see so far.

"They'll drink there till closing-time," said Wisdom. "Then they'll be away."

"Maybe." There was something in Mami's tone which caused Wisdom and Marta to look sharply at her. She had gone back to the caravan and was sitting on the step. "Not like Black Herbie to go so quiet." Something was puzzling her; her face was wrinkled up like an old russet apple that had hung all winter on the tree.

"What is it, Mami?" Marta said.

"I smell trouble." She smelled things in her mind, pestilence, death, fire, flood, passing fantasies; they passed through her consciousness like scent on a wind. "It is passing. Maybe it was nothing at all. Black Herbie is going. But I shall sleep sounder," said Mami, "when I know he has gone."

Tim had been looking round, seeming puzzled, at Wisdom's dun tethered with two piebald ponies beyond the caravan. Now he turned to Wisdom. He said: "But where is she?"

Wisdom smiled cunningly at Tim. Marta said: "Give me your handkerchief."

"Lucky it's a clean one," Tim said, as Marta merrily chuckling stepped behind Marianne and threw the handkerchief over her eyes. While she knotted it Wisdom went round to the space between the caravan and the hedge.

"You're not cheating?" said Marta.

"No, I can't see a thing."

"Wait till I tell you. *Now*," said Marta, almost dancing with excitement.

Marianne took the handkerchief from her eyes and the jet-black pony pirouetted in front of her. Wisdom must have just groomed it; it shone like ebony in the sun. Wisdom gave Marianne its halter and she ran her fingers through its long mane. "You couldn't have the dun," Tim said, and Wisdom shook his head vigorously. "But Wisdom went to Leominster for me yesterday to have a look at this. Wisdom thinks it's the next best thing to his dun."

"Better!" cried Marianne. "Oh, better!" She gave Wisdom back the halter and kissed Tim in front of the gipsies. The example was too much for Marta; she promptly seized Marianne and cushioned her against her big warm bosom. Then she laid hold of Tim and hugged him too. Mami wasn't going to be left out. "Don't forget old Mami on your birthday!" Marianne had to bend down, to kiss her on her grimy forehead.

"You got a good gel," said Mami to Tim. "She'll keep you in order, a gel who Black Herbie's frit of."

Wisdom promised to take the black pony up to the Hope tomorrow. Then Tim and Marianne went back to the car.

All the rest of the day they were together, driving round the country lanes between the hedgerows, stopping at a little inn for dinner, gazing at the indigo hills as the sun set below the harvested fields.

"I believe I love this countryside," Marianne said.

"I'm glad. Because it's the only place for me," Tim replied.

She didn't question it when, beneath a full moon, Tim drove straight back to Sollarshill and parked the car in the yard; though she was still frightened of Sollarshill, and she thought it might spoil everything if he took her in to see his father and mother now.

They had been expected by the gipsies; they had been expected at the inn where the landlord had come bustling out to meet them, where Tim, ringing up beforehand, had already chosen the dinner and the wine. They weren't expected here: there was one light in a bedroom, but it was dark downstairs.

Then Tim took her hand and led her, not towards the house, but towards one of the loose boxes where she could hear a cow munching. The moonlight went in with them as he opened the door, and a little calf's face, with its broad white forehead, appeared.

It was still not quite strong on its legs. Tim went into the loose box and the cow tossed her head restlessly as he picked up the calf. He carried it to Marianne, and it looked like a toy, its legs stuck out so straight and stiff.

"Solarshill Sally's son," he said. "Delivered in the early hours this morning. It's mine."

"Yours?"

"Father promised it to me. Look: those shoulders; look at the breadth there across its loins. We'll win a championship with it if we're lucky." He looked straight at her when he said "We"; she thought he didn't mean himself and John Sollars.

"Born on my birthday," Marianne said.

"It's still your birthday," said Tim, looking at his watch.

"What time?"

"Ten to twelve."

Tim gave the calf back to Sally. It began to suck, clumsily, noisily. Tim came back to Marianne.

"Still your birthday." He took both her hands, very gently, and she stood on tiptoe to kiss him. She said: "If all days could be like today."

"No," said Tim.

"Why no?"

"Because," he said, "it's not special days I want with you but ordinary days." He couldn't possibly have said anything happier. "Me mucky and tired, gumboots when you go to feed the chickens, cold hands, mud on the carpet, log fire, brats." He broke off suddenly. "What's the matter?"

She had been looking beyond him, into the dark mystery of the straw-piled barn next to the loose boxes.

"I—it's nothing. I thought I saw a speck of light, that's all. There—in the barn."

He turned sharply and at that moment she saw it again. The tiniest flicker of brightness. Tim saw it too.

Suddenly urgent, he almost pulled her across the yard.

Just under the bolting of straw that jutted out from the rest of the straw was an old battered tin. Marianne thought at first it was the moonlight glinting on this tin that had caught her eye. So she was laughing when Tim picked up the tin, and held it to her, and she saw the candle.

A candle burning inside the tin; and floating in something that looked like water.

TIM dipped his finger in the liquid and put it on his tongue. The candle was burned down almost to the level of the liquid.

"Petrol!" Tim said.

"Why petrol?"

He blew out the candle. There was about a quarter of an inch between the guttering top of the candle and the petrol in the tin. "See how it would have burned," he said, and looked at the straw. Beyond the barn there was another building, and a sudden loud snort made her jump.

"Samson's in there," said Tim. "The calf's father."

She felt a spasm of fear in the pit of her stomach; she remembered old Mami sitting on the caravan step, smelling trouble.

"Black Herbie," said Tim, and he threw the tin away across the yard.

"They said he was away."

"Of course he's gone, now. It'd

take two hours for the candle to. . . . I daresay he slipped up here when the pub shut."

She clutched Tim and, shutting her eyes, she saw red flames licking the straw in the barn.

"It's all right now," Tim said.

And then they heard footsteps. Very slowly the footsteps came round the corner by the loose box and she didn't know why she expected to see Black Herbie, because of course Black Herbie wouldn't be likely to return after he had put down the tin.

John Sollars had a torch, and he shone it on them, but by the moonlight she could see who it was standing behind the torch. He said: "Oh, Tim," and he switched off the torch as he came towards them.

"I thought I saw a light——"

Tim's hand tightened on Marianne's arm as he said: "I was showing Marianne Sally's calf. I expect. . . ."

She knew he wasn't going to tell his father about the tin.

JOHN SOLLARS looked at her. She wondered if he was going to say: "Oh, it's you, miss." But she wasn't frightened of him now. She was defensive, but she no longer felt insecure.

Marianne knew that she would never be frightened of John Sollars again.

He said at last, with a kind of tired but savage irony: "Are you interested in calves?"

"She'd better be," said Tim, "if she's going to marry me."

John Sollars took a step forward. He and Tim stood face to face, and she wondered if this was the first real conflict they had had. Tim was standing very straight. She was aware of anger and love between them. Then Tim shifted his arm so that it was firm and possessive round her waist.

John Sollars turned his head towards Marianne. "Is that true?" he asked her sharply.

"Yes!" she almost shouted, and she was so little afraid of him now that she could have laughed when it suddenly occurred to her that Tim, up till this moment, had not asked her to marry him.

For a moment she thought she saw anger and pain in John Sollars's face. Then, to her astonishment, he put out his hand. He seemed to do so in response to the compulsion of an inescapable courtesy; she knew he did not want to shake her hand, and a little anger flared up in her as she took his hand. There was nothing of congratulation in his gesture; it was a kind of acknowledgement, no more. But anger left her, and she felt pity for him now and, with pity, respect.

He said: "There it is, then. So good luck."

Their hands met. For a long moment John Sollars's grip held. Then, surprisingly, he laughed, resignedly yet in a kindly way. He bent down and kissed her.

"I'm an old fool, I expect," he said. "Bless you both." He turned to Tim. "So they've got downy mildew at the Hope?"

"Yes. Marianne told me."

"And they've lost half their pickers —those varmints?"

"Yes."

"Well, it would be a neighbourly thing if you took up half of our pickers tomorrow, to give 'em a hand." He looked at Tim hard, almost fiercely. "Since you're going to marry the girl," he said. He turned to Marianne, half laughing, half angry still. "Come along in. We'd better have a drink on it, I suppose. . ."

It seemed strange that they wouldn't be picking tomorrow. For ten days—ever since Marianne's birthday—they had worked from early-breakfast time until the last light, which fell a little earlier every day. The untiring sun had shone for them; and in five days, with the help of John's pickers, they had raced and beaten the downy mildew which had been spreading through Tommy's bines. Then Tommy, returning John's compliment, had taken down his pickers to give a hand at Sollarshill. Now all the picking was finished there, too.

Everyone was delighted, and no one more so than George, who had now become so absorbed by the farmers' battle against encroaching winter that he declared farming to be the ideal life and almost denied he had ever thought of selling Tommy up.

Tim and Carol had pulled the longest bines they could find from the very last hop-row of all, and Carol had decorated the walls of the oasthouse with them, ready for the dance tonight on the hop-floor.

Now the band, which Carol had hired from Ledbury, were just beginning to warm up. Jill Ferrers, with some of her pony club friends, was warmed up already; she was blowing a hunting horn. It made an excruciating noise in the confined space of the oast. Seeking to escape from it, Tim and Marianne went down the wooden steps into the kiln, where Tim had rigged up a bar and the maid Polly was serving drinks.

Marianne was looking at Tim over her glass, turning up her eyes to him, the look he always called Cat with cream. He said: "Couldn't we slip out for a bit?"

"No, it's much too early; you've got to entertain your guests."

"Well, soon we'll slip out."

"Next time that girl starts blowing her hunting horn."

So they went up to the hop-floor again, and the Paul Jones was on. It was hateful when the music stopped and she had to leave Tim. She got three hot-handed youths in succession.

The fourth time Marianne found herself left out of the Paul Jones, and she went and sat by Mrs. Sollars, who had "just come in for half an hour."

"I shan't stay," she said. "I want to get Father off to bed early." And that was the first time she had ever called him Father to Marianne.

Then the Paul Jones was over, and as Tim came across to collect Marianne Jill Ferrers celebrated the conclusion of the Paul Jones by blowing her hunting horn.

"Hurray!" said Tim, and they went down the steps, through the kiln, out into the yard.

"I think it's the most revolting noise——"

"You wait till you hear it tomorrow morning," said Tim. "At the covert-side very faint and far-off; and then the hounds come streaming out and you see the red coats against the yellow wood." They were going cubbing together tomorrow.

"Oh, Tim," she said, "look at our moon." It was only the vestige of a moon, a mere cedilla in the sky.

"It's going," she said.

"It's done us proud, hasn't it?"

"It's jolly well done us proud."

They were kissing when John Sollars came round the corner of the oast. They didn't hear him coming and he didn't see them until he was nearly on top of them.

"Looking at calves?" he said, and stumped off. He had been counting the pockets in the barn; the last time he need count them. There were two hundred and sixty-seven. The hops were in. Tomorrow he was going for his X-ray.

He hadn't thought about it till now. All the afternoon he had been taking cuttings from his geraniums. It was the only gardening job he did himself; like all farmers he hated fiddling with gardens. But his father had been fond of geraniums, and had always looked after them. It had become a tradition that John should do that little task every autumn.

He thought: "Wish they could take a cutting from me."

Then he glanced back and saw Tim and his girl scuttling back into the oasthouse: Tim, that tall young limb, a cutting of a kind. Another such, before long, from the way those two were going about it.

So you went on, he thought, in a manner of speaking. Nature took her cuttings in her own way. THE END

"September Moon," by John Moore, is published as a book by Collins at 15s.

EGOTISM—3

The unfortunate are always egotistical.

Benjamin Disraeli

WHY?

LAST year Mr. and Mrs. Hardcastle bought a suite of furniture on hire purchase. Unfortunately, the material across the back of one of the armchairs was stretched too tightly, and within a month the pressure from people sitting in the chair caused it to give at the edges.

Mr. Hardcastle complained to the furniture shop and, although they tried to put the defect right, they were unable to do so. So he sued the shopkeeper, alleging that the chair was not fit for its purpose, namely, sitting in.

The shopkeeper denied liability. His counsel read out the hire purchase agreement which the Hardcastles had signed. It contained a clause that no warranty or condition was given as to the fitness of the furniture for any particular purpose, a fact to which he drew the court's attention.

"But the Hardcastles never read the agreement before signing it," contended their lawyer.

"That is irrelevant," replied the shopkeeper's counsel. "If someone signs a contractual document without reading it beforehand, he is nonetheless bound by the terms of it."

Yet the Hardcastles won their action.

WHY? *A barrister explains the judge's ruling on page 31*

End of the holiday

Continued from page 9

could be anywhere. . . . Tom, it could be anywhere."

But Tom came suddenly to life, and jerked into the roadway, arms flagging at the taxis. One pulled into the kerb. He pushed Kathy inside and gave the name of the hotel. All the way there he gazed up, up at the crazy roofs of the old tenements.

Perhaps the taxi driver knew they were frightened. Or perhaps he always drove like that, blinding past the shuttered shops, and the churches, the Bar Alfred de Musset and the Auberge de la Poule Qui Parle. As the car shrieked round into the street where they were staying, Tom knew what would greet them: the roar of flames, and the crash of falling timber; the quiet crowd; the firm, impassive faces of the police. . . .

The street was silent, empty, lit only by a lamp shining on the poster for *Les Aventures de Brigitte*. A cat was sleeping on the step of the hotel.

Kathy raced ahead to the children, but Tom climbed slowly, sorrowfully. He had stopped on the sixth floor to rest against the baluster when he heard Kathy's scream. In a quick, stumbling run up the stairs he was there with her, staring at the empty room and the empty bed.

Then he noticed where she was looking. Along the landing the collapsible staircase to the fire escape was down, and the trapdoor was standing open to the night.

Kathy's voice came, high and hysterical: "Tom, I showed them. Tom, I showed them the staircase. Oh Tom, it's my fault."

He dashed to the stairway and went groping up it. And, in the few seconds of climbing, he saw himself plain. It was his fault more than hers. He'd left his kids on their own at night in a foreign city. Always, he'd have to remember what he'd done. . . .

He stopped, head and shoulders through the hole in the roof, blinded by the dark. For a minute he could see nothing except a floodlit dome over by the river. A fresh wind touched his face. His ears picked out the murmur of late traffic, the roar of a distant train, a radio somewhere, pumping out dance music.

When his vision cleared, he saw a blob of white, twenty feet away by a chimney stack. "I'm coming," he shouted. The voice was throaty, not his own. "Chris, Timmy. . . . I'm coming."

Between them was the narrow track of a catwalk, the steep pitch of the roof falling away on either side. He moved forward. The walk had a rail of sorts. There was no danger, but the pressure of the wind against him tightened his fear for his sons. He sensed the eight-storey drop.

As he advanced, the blob of white took shape in the darkness. Suddenly he stopped, and for a terrible moment remained quite still, horror flooding through him.

He could see one of the boys kneeling by the chimney stack. Christopher. Alone.

In a loose, springing run, he got across the last feet and pinned his son to the chimney with a great arm. "Where's Timmy?" he asked roughly. "Where is he?"

Chris was rigid, ice-cold, deep in shock. "We were exploring. . . . Timmy fell. . . ."

Chris's voice was a tiny whisper. Tom followed his eyes and saw an incline of slates, falling to a gutter. Beyond the gutter was a narrow parapet of stone, perhaps eighteen inches wide. Beyond that, nothing.

Timmy lay sprawled, motionless, across the parapet.

Tom crouched by the chimney, paralysed by fear. He held his breath, as if the slightest movement would send the young body over the edge, to the end of things eight floors below.

Then Timothy moved. It was only a faint movement of an arm, and then he was still again. But it was enough to release Tom. In a flash his coat was off and round Christopher, and then he was moving, and past the chimney

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to where a ridge of raised stone ran from the catwalk to the parapet.

Taking infinite care, not for himself but for Timmy, he lowered himself from the walk, straddling the stone ridge, binding himself to it with his thighs.

Slipping down it, he tore at the stone with his fingers, till one hand found a crevice and held. His feet scrabbled for purchase, shoes rasping on the weathered stone. One of his shoes came off.

He heard the light slither of leather on slate, an endless silence, and then a light tap as it fell on the paving far below.

He froze where he was. Then inch by inch, he went down the ridge. He slipped again. Skin left his hands and face as he braked violently, flesh against stone.

At last his feet told him he was down to the parapet. Turning his head, still lying against the stone ridge, he could see Timmy two yards to the right.

For a moment he lay there, resting. Tension goaded his mind, and he saw how Kathy's fussing had brought this on them, and how behind Kathy's fussing lay his own failure these last few years to live in his family, to share the worry of it, to help with even tiny plans.

"Kathy, love, I'll make it up to you." His lips framed the words, and he stretched out a hand toward Timothy. The movement made his right foot slip slightly toward the edge of the parapet, and all this thought was swallowed up in terror. He saw himself and the boy, falling . . . falling. . . .

PANIC was at him then. He felt the strength leaving his muscles. But Timmy moved slightly, and again it was the move that saved Tom. For his son's sake he beat down his fear. He let his feet slide outwards, across the smooth width of the parapet, over the edge of it. He was kneeling now, and he knew that if he crabbed sideways, knee following knee, he could get to Timothy.

He dared not turn to crawl; if he did, he would look down; and that would be the end.

He started, thinking no more, leaning the weight of himself over the slates, his eyes riveted on the roof a few inches from his head. His will alone sucked him to that place; he stayed on it, moving with agonizing slowness till at last his right hand, groping about for a hold, touched Timmy.

There was nothing more he could do. He knelt there, his hand pressed down firmly on the boy's back to stop him moving.

Physical pain was grasping at him now; his mind was too numb to hurt him. Cramp bit into his twisted legs. He felt an insane desire to kick them out. And always, at his back, the void pulled at him, calling to him to give up, to let go.

How long he was there, he never knew. But at last there were shouts, and a bright beam from the catwalk on the roof. Men with ropes came slithering down the slates. He felt his mind turn and swim, but he fought on through the last, worst seconds till firm hands caught at him. . . .

When they got him down through the roof, Tom found a doctor inside. Someone threw a rug round his shoulders, and he tensed himself to watch the man running quick hands over Timmy. The doctor, young and eager, looked up and nodded reassuringly. Chris, watching white-faced, managed to smile.

Now Tom could meet Kathy's eyes. She was at his side, and his hands trembled as they framed her face and dug into her hair.

"Tom," she said. "If only I hadn't. . . ."

Her words were lost as he drew her to his chest.

"Kathy," he whispered down at her. "It's going to be different now. We are going to share. . . ."

Slowly she raised her face to him. Then, together, they turned to the boys. THE END

The secret invaders

Continued from page 17

whooping after Harbud, who clutched his trousers and ran to escape the time-honoured de-bagging with which they sought to salute his promotion. He fought valiantly. . . .

A week before Christmas, with mounting pressure from Combined Operations Headquarters to hurry the Normandy reconnaissance, Copp team No. 1 finished its training in midget submarines and moved south by rail—into well-equipped headquarters in Fort Blockhouse at the western entrance to Portsmouth Harbour.

Blockhouse struck a grimly business-like contrast with the loch-side idyll the team had left. Instead of a placid sheet of water reflecting the rich-hued folds of Argyllshire, the view was of submarines and motor torpedo boats which nuzzled at the quays.

Suddenly the world around them seemed to be full of admirals and high-ranking army officers. There were hurried summonses to conferences in the big, map-lined rooms at Force Headquarters in Cowes, where reigned the grim and electric figure of Rear-Admiral Sir Philip Vian, whose destroyer Cossack had liberated three hundred British prisoners from the German ship Altmark. Further conferences were held at the headquarters of Admiral Sir Charles Little, the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth.

The sheer weight of service brass surrounding Willmott and his little band as they bent over charts and tide tables at these meetings was overpowering. Willmott began the most exhausting fortnight in his life. He was constantly summoned not only by Force Headquarters and the C.-in-C. Portsmouth, but also by Combined Operations Headquarters and the 21st Army Group in London. He went from one to the other till he felt dizzy. . . .

The invasion planners had come face to face with their first big poser. They were clamouring for the answer to it.

Scientists and staff intelligence officers at 21st Army Group had spotted it. Brigadier Edgar Williams, Montgomery's Chief Intelligence Officer, took Willmott over to a table where a great panorama of aerial pictures showed the wide surf-laced bay of the Seine. He pointed to a series of strange dark strips, fairly broad. Bands of them stretched along beach after beach.

"What are they?" Willmott asked. "Mud?"

"Seems like it. The geologists say they might be. But an archaeologist tells us that there used to be some old Roman peat workings around the bay. This means that the strips could be a peat bog."

"Oh, dear!" said Willmott. Everybody else was silent.

"Everything except infantry will sink into it. We've had tests made on similar-looking formations in Norfolk. Either we have to evolve special methods to cross it—or change our whole plan."

The tall, donnish brigadier straightened up and said: "We must get hold of detailed samples of that beach *immediately*."

Willmott thought very hard. The dark period in January, when he had reckoned on making his reconnaissance, was five weeks ahead. Now he had to try to rush everything to be ready in the next week or so. The tides and weather were bad for X-craft.

The brigadier followed him to the door. With his fist on the handle he said quietly: "If you only find out what those strips mean—nothing else—all your training will have been worthwhile. . . ."

Three days before Christmas, on one of his many trips to London, Willmott came out of a conference at Combined Operations and phoned a leading Wren named Prue Wright, who was on leave. He had first met her when she was assigned to him as his driver. She was brisk and efficient, and had golden hair which rolled in a glossy fall from under her cap.

The friendship between them had grown slowly, then quickly, until they had dinner together quite often. When she gave Willmott some mittens, he solemnly wore them at breakfast.

Their last meeting had been shortly after her twenty-first birthday, when he had taken her to the Embassy Club in London. This time, they had tea at Fortnum's, dinner at the Normandie, and danced at the 400 Club. There was a bottle of whisky on the table between them, and as he looked at her he knew, from all the unspoken things, that it was only a question of *when* he should ask her to marry him. Now? Or after this Channel trip from which, more likely than at previous times, he might not come back.

He looked at the whisky bottle, then at the crowded tables and the dance floor jammed with couples.

"I never . . ." he said, and halted. She lifted her brows inquiringly but he only smiled. "I never propose in night clubs," was what he was going to say.

On Christmas Eve he returned to London, via a trip to Siebe Gorman and Co., in Surrey, to try out the latest kind of swimming suit they had evolved. When he called for Prue Wright, he had no intention of getting lost in the hurly-burly of a night club. He walked with her across the swirl of traffic below Hyde Park Corner, down Constitution Hill and into St. James's Park.

It was cold, and they had the park almost to themselves. A glint of water and the dark tracery of trees showed through the mist. As quietly and directly as he was suddenly asking her to marry him, she answered, serenely as always. "Yes," she said.

And then they were laughing. . . .

A FORTNIGHT of decision and counter-decision as to when the first foray across the Channel should be made had set up an almost unbearable tension at Blockhouse.

Three days after Christmas it was settled. The Coppists were to set out in the midget submarine X-20 to lie off the Normandy coast, and when the weather allowed, run in at night, some time between December 30 and January 1, to let swimmers ashore for the first reconnaissance. The planners were hustled into deciding this, for the precious dark nights of December were running out. After January 1, a reconnaissance could not be risked for three more weeks.

Willmott and his other swimmers made a very special trip to London. This time, they went to St. James's Square. Parked in the square was a big covered R.A.F. trailer. They disappeared up the steps inside this, and there changed into old clothes.

Willmott donned a beret and wound a filthy scarf round his neck. He posed fiercely before a photographer, and his picture went on to a bogus set of identity papers. According to these, he was a neutral seaman. In case he was captured, his cover story was that he had been wrecked when his ship struck a mine in the Channel, and he had managed to get ashore.

It was a bit thin, and since the story had already been changed a couple of times, it was a strain on the memory of the most accomplished liar. The important thing, if by chance they got stranded ashore, was to sink or bury their gear, worm their way inland through the defences and try to reach the Maquis. To smooth the way, once inland, they had Vichy passports. If they didn't make it—well, the best they could hope for was to divert their interrogators' suspicions.

A day before they were to sail, the

WHY?

See page 29

BECAUSE the judge held that the usual rule that a person is bound by a contractual document which he has signed, irrespective of whether he has read it or not, does not apply to all kinds of hire purchase agreements.

A clause in a hire purchase agreement exempting the seller from liability if the goods are not reasonably fit for use is only effective if, before the agreement is made, the provision is specifically pointed out to the buyer and its effect made clear to him.

The shopkeeper had not pointed out the clause to the Hardcastles, and therefore it was invalid.

(This ruling is based on actual cases)

scheme on which they had worked for months was changed. Planners who, for some while, had been arguing against using X-craft in lowish tides and ungenerous darkness had won. The Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, a veteran of Submarine Branch, voiced their thoughts. "Quite apart from the tides and the moon," he said, "this is against you."

He tapped a chart. On it was marked the Calvados Reef—a ledge of rock off the Normandy village of Courseulles which stretched out to sea like a plateau under the water. At low tide the sea would ebb and leave the X-craft stranded helplessly on it.

"The risk of compromise is too high. To get beach samples, at a typical spot, of this alleged peat bog formation is a one-night job, that's all. You don't need midget submarines, because you won't be staying long. Why not use navigational landing craft?"

So, with forty hours to go, the Coppists started work on fresh operational drill using the small cabin-enclosed L.C.N.s. Everybody was fed up with this, including the X-craft crews, robbed of an honour they had trained for four months to earn.

"Don't be disappointed," Willmott told them. "The next dark period will be yours."

They grinned back at him glumly. It wasn't the same, and he knew it.

The two little L.C.N.s awaiting the Coppists at Cowes certainly had advantages for this first all-important dash to France and back. Designed for riding high up beaches on Commando raids, they had flat bottoms which would enable them to skim over the shallows of the Calvados Reef. Even though they presented larger silhouettes than submarines, they were still small enough, it was hoped, not to provide arresting specks on the enemy's shore radar.

Up forward under the windscreen of each L.C.N., the coxswain operated the steering wheel. From the windscreen, a canvas prop canopy was drawn over steel stanchions right aft, and lashed to the gunwales. The L.C.N.s bristled with navigational aids, including echo sounders and G-set radio navigators.

Three motor gunboats, two of them towing an L.C.N. each and the third acting as leader, were to take the L.C.N.s across the Channel as far as the outer limit of the Germans' radar, and there release them.

It was a typical December morning, bleak, with lowering cloud, when Admiral Vian himself saw them off with handshakes and his rather forbidding features creased in a grin.

"Good luck, Willmott."

Where the crossing was to be made, the Channel was more than one hundred miles wide. The M.G.B.s threw up graceful curls of foam as they nosed through the swell. With Willmott in the senior gunboat were his signals officer, Lieutenant Peter Wild, Galwey, Major Logan Scott-Bowden, a tough Sapper who had established himself as a fearless Coppist, and Sergeant Ogden Smith, a cheerful fellow with a taste for practical jokes.

They worked out their sortie schedules during the afternoon while they ploughed on through the grey-green sea, now out of sight of land. Scott-Bowden and Smith were to do the actual swimming. Galwey, in the other L.C.N., would stand by in case of trouble.

Darkness closed about them. The gunboats began flashing to each other and they hove to. Willmott's L.C.N. came alongside the gunboat and he and his companions waved and jumped for the heaving deck. Galwey and a Copp rating transferred to the standby craft. The black shapes of the gunboats wheeled. Over the wind a "Good luck!" floated to the Coppists, and the gunboats were gone.

THREE hours to get to the shore. If they were to use the darkness hours fully, they would have to be in position to release their swimmers by 10.30.

The wind rose in gusts. The little L.C.N.s began to buck and reel at the thump of the swell. It was pitch black, and the weather and sea were worsening steadily. Willmott heard the sound of retching. It was Smith. Beside him, Scott-Bowden groaned and swore. They would not be in the best shape to go swimming by the time they arrived—that is, *if* they arrived. The sea was still rising. It was no night for shallow-draft tubs.

At this point the C.O. of Willmott's landing craft chose to touch Willmott on the shoulder and unburden himself. "I'm afraid," he murmured, "we've lost our anchor and the sounding pole. They rolled out overboard."

"Good God!" Willmott said. "Weren't they secured?"

"Not properly. They must have worked loose with the weather. Both my seamen are a bit green, you know."

What a fine time to learn *that*! A green crew for the first recce of Normandy!

Then the rain started, and the sea mounted in fury. The wind backed until it was almost head-on. Though it made them pitch like porpoises it also promised shelter inshore. They would be approaching the Calvados Reef soon. Willmott heard Scott-Bowden grunting as he shrugged into his suit.

Ten o'clock. They turned south to run straight for the coast. After ten more minutes of staring into the night the lookout yelled: "Light on the starboard bow, sir!"

So there was. The beam of a lighthouse wheeled over the troubled sea. By their calculations it was Pointe de Ver. Then farther east another light speared the horizon. That would be Ouistreham. This was mixed luck. "The lights must be on for a Hun convoy," Willmott said uneasily. "Keep your eyes peeled."

They hove to. Galwey's landing craft bobbed abreast of them and dropped her anchor. She was to wait on the outer edge of Calvados Reef. A faint line of surf showed the reef dead ahead.

Wallowing in a sea that surged beam-on, Willmott's L.C.N. nosed ahead, feeling her way cautiously inshore over the reef. The echo-sounding machine had broken down, so a rating had to stand clutching the canopy and thrusting a boathook into the sea to take soundings.

They were heading straight towards

LEAVES FROM
Starke's
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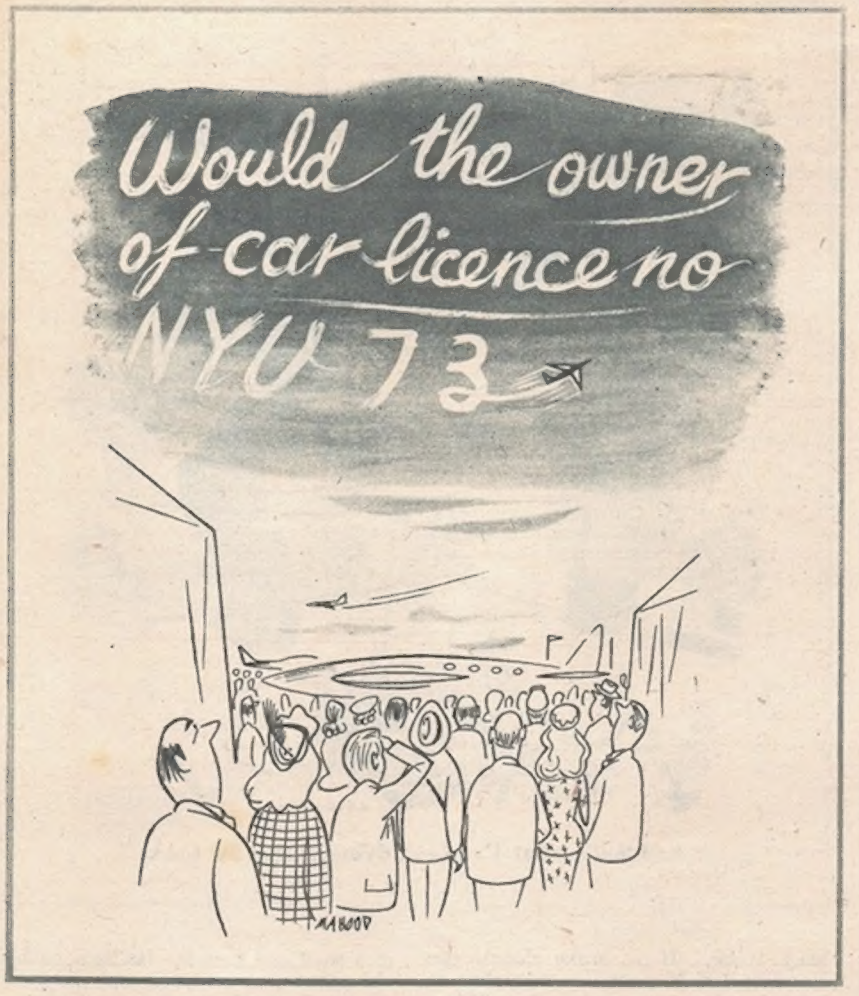
"The narrow streets, splashed with sunlight or shadowed by dark arches, are strangely fascinating"



the Pointe de Ver lighthouse. Willmott murmured in a drawl, full of soothing authority: "We won't be seen, not in this sea."

They managed to cross the reef. The lighthouse beam scythed around, raindrops glinting in it. Willmott sensed the fidgeting around him, the terrible uneasiness gripping them. A rating said with a humorous shudder, tinged with the fear he was fighting: "Oh, muvver!"

"It's all right," said Willmott. He sounded like a doctor preparing his patients for the part that was going to hurt.

There was only five feet of water under them. The beach was about two hundred yards ahead. A huddle of houses to port—the village of Ver—showed against the sky. Willmott found Scott-Bowden and Smith at his elbow. Silently they slid into the water, and waited.

Willmott kneeled at the side of the L.C.N. "Off you go," he whispered. Almost immediately the two men were out of sight.

The L.C.N. went astern, keeping head-on to the beach to reduce her silhouette, and made for the agreed rendezvous point, about five hundred yards offshore. She dropped a makeshift anchor—improvised from a reel of heavy wire attached to a light sheet anchor.

Willmott and his companions kept watching anxiously all round them. If radar or shore lookouts had spotted them, they might have the enemy pounce on them at any minute. Furthermore, there was always the chance of a coastal patrol boat sniffing around.

Then Willmott saw lights ashore. He peered into the night and made out the shapes of sentries walking along an embankment. They had torches out, and were flashing them around. . . .

The tide swept Scott-Bowden and Smith a hundred yards past the landing point they had marked. They grounded in three foot of water. Both of them felt weak from their vomiting.

While they lurked in the shallows, Scott-Bowden moved his head close to his sergeant's. He breathed: "Don't forget; be careful. There may be mines."

"I'll let you know if I hit one," said Smith. Sometimes he overdid the humour maddeningly.

They reached the water's edge and felt for their reels. The line on each of these reels had a bead at every fifty yards. Each man staked his line into the sand, then came slowly up out of the water and began worming over the beach paying out from the reel. They were well across the beach when Smith reached forward and tapped the major. "Hey!" he whispered.

Scott-Bowden turned anxiously. "What?"

"Happy New Year, sir!"

The major bared his teeth and said something blisteringly unprintable.

They worked on. Every time beads slipped through their fingers, they dug augers into the sand, emptied the samples of sand thus obtained into rubber pouches, and put the pouches into bandoliers round their waists.

A torch flashed. Both men froze. The beam came from the sea wall above them. It stabbed out over the beach and swept it. Farther along the embankment, another light was snapped on. It too swung towards them.

For a panic-stricken instant the Coppists thought they had been spotted. The first light wandered over the glistening sand. Smith felt it like a pain as it passed over his body. He winced and stayed deathly still.

Then the lights went out. The sound of a sentry's jackboots kept coming on, but at a leisurely pace. They heard him stop, wheel and recede.

WHEN they had filled their bandoliers with samples, Scott-Bowden whispered: "Let's go up for a look round." They wriggled towards the road, watching the nearest sentry and doing a spurt of crawling each time he wheeled and moved away.

They reached the road, and crossed it. Crouching on the far side of it, they raised their heads to stare at houses and concrete emplacements which they at once recognized from photographs. Every silhouette that seemed new was noted.

At last, while Smith dropped his head to get the crick out of his neck, Scott-Bowden whispered, looking at his watch: "Time to go. Come on."

Just in time, Smith shot out an arm and stayed him. Their sentry had turned back noiselessly upon them, his boots muffled in a sand drift on the roadside.

"Eh du! Komm mal her!"

He was hailing his mate. A shadow

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joined him from along the road. Right opposite them, barring the Coppists' escape route back to the sea, the two sentries unslung their rifles, stretched and talked in growling undertones.

It seemed an age before they parted company and the major and his sergeant could slip back across the road and down on to the beach.

"We're too late for our first rendezvous time. Now we'll have to wait till one thirty," Smith gasped.

The cold half-paralysed them. They just crouched, shivering violently, longing for the time to pass and watching the Pointe de Ver lighthouse turn its beam on the sea where their L.C.N. waited.

At last Scott-Bowden tapped Smith and the two men slid down into the water. Loaded with samples, measuring gear, torches and revolvers, they found it hard going. The first big wave hit them and knocked them both off their feet. But soon they were away from the beach. The major took out his torch, held it up and flashed it.

Willmott saw the signal and ordered his boat towards them. But the boat's anchor refused to come up. Far from allowing them to drift, as they had feared, it was holding too well.

"We *must* get it up," said Willmott. "We daren't cut the cable. The enemy would find it at low tide." Everyone but the helmsman hauled with a concerted grunting. Finally it yielded to them.

The L.C.N. went in, see-sawing on the swell, her engines pulsing quietly. The swimmers were exhausted and it was a tricky business getting them inboard over the high gunwales. Both men flopped down at once and lay gasping. The little L.C.N. reversed discreetly into the waves. With the shoreline growing fainter, she dared to turn about and made for the rendezvous with the standby L.C.N.

WILD began signalling, but there was no answer. They turned and repeated the drill three times on the bearings arranged. Still there was no answer.

Could the stand-by's anchor cable have parted and her engine stalled? Was she adrift at sea, or being swept ashore, right into the arms of the Jerries? To make matters worse, the tide was falling.

"There she is!" Wild said. In desperation he had begun flashing all over the sea. "She's miles out of position!"

The crew of the stand-by L.C.N. had turned out to be not only inexperienced, but also prone to seasickness. In their wretchedness they had failed to secure the inboard end of their cable when anchoring. The tide, flowing fiercely, had torn it away from them.

The two L.C.N.s carrying the first men to land on the invasion beaches of Normandy then set out for their rendezvous with the gunboats in mid-Channel for the tow back to Britain.

They weren't out of trouble by a long way. Willmott didn't like the look of the sky. It seemed as if their worst enemy—the weather—was still ahead of them.

Sleet came first, lashing their numbed faces. Then came squalls in great gusts laden with stinging rain. The L.C.N.s began to bump and tremble. The sea broke green over their frail canopies.

Willmott's L.C.N. commander yelled: "We can't make more than seven knots against this!"

"If we don't get back to the gunboats by dawn, we may never do it," said Willmott. He was thinking of Messerschmitts and E-boats.

One of the crew squinted out into the dark and remarked: "The lighthouses have switched off."

"That's good of them—now we're going," said Willmott. Well, at least they wouldn't run into the convoy.

He stared for a sight of the other L.C.N., but she was hidden in darkness flecked with gouts of spray. His eyes began roving the sea anxiously until, in quite the wrong quarter, he glimpsed her steering as wildly as themselves.

Willmott hoped their engine would

"And *that's* what I've been dying to say for weeks"

keep going. If it broke down, the stand-by L.C.N. would be powerless to haul them out of a sea like this. When he again looked across for the comforting presence of the other L.C.N., it had gone. This time it had really disappeared.

There was a terrible silence in Willmott's L.C.N. at this. Through it, the engine throbbed steadily.

Willmott murmured: "Right. Let's go back and look for them." He tried to sound casual and unperturbed, but really it was the worst moment of all—turning back, in this sea, with dawn now only an hour away.

They retraced their route for four or five miles, the Coppists and crew on their feet, clinging wretchedly and scanning the waves. No answer came to their signals.

"Try them on R/T," Willmott ordered.

The R/T was used, but without receiving a reply. Either the stand-by's own radio was swamped, or she had no one to man it.

Willmott's L.C.N. even fired Verey lights. No reply. Willmott knew that

EGOTISM—4

There would be no supporting life if we felt quite as poignantly for others as we do for ourselves.

Samuel Richardson

he had to rendezvous with the gunboats soon. His L.C.N. didn't have much fuel left. They turned about and headed north.

"Minefield," Peter Wild said, interestedly, scanning his chart.

"Never mind," said Willmott.

There was no longer any time for navigational finesse. Their one chance was to set course straight for their rendezvous, open up, and to hell with mines.

They cut through some huge waves which hit them almost hard enough to break their back, but this scarcely seemed to matter any more. They *had* to reach those M.G.B.s.

At last they were through the minefield. It was late, but they were not many miles from the rendezvous. When the fix from the G-set showed that they were coming closer, Willmott took out his Verey pistol, plugged in a shell and fired it. Its light bathed the wavetops in crimson and was gone. At intervals, Willmott kept firing.

"There they are, sir!" shouted the lookout.

Far over to port, a white Verey light hung in the sky.

"The colour's wrong," Willmott snapped. Now they were in a fix. Was it a trap?

Another light exploded. Green. Then a white one. This time there were the right colours of their code.

"Yippee," said the helmsman, solemnly toneless, and brought the wheel over.

They were almost abreast of their gunboat, trying to get a tow rope aboard her, when the lookout gave an excited yell. A Verey shell had burst low in the pale heavens astern. It was from Galwey's L.C.N. She had made it on her own. They hallooed and yelled and made rude noises, giddy with relief.

It was getting lighter every minute now, and the flotilla was only thirty-five miles off the French coast. Both L.C.N.s had a job picking up the tow, but at last they were away, slapping through a sea that still drove wildly at them. Nearer home, they hove to while the Coppists—all except the valiant Smith, who was wretchedly seasick—transferred to the senior gunboat.

With the wind now backing to the west, it was soon obvious that they would have to run for a harbour more to leeward than Portsmouth. Accordingly, the flotilla altered course for Newhaven.

What put their tails up when they got there was to learn that Coastal Forces motor torpedo boats which had been sent out to do a patrol not far from them off Le Havre had turned back, deciding that it was too rough. The M.T.B.s had staggered back into port looking as though they had been through a hurricane.

As soon as Willmott reached Blockhouse at Portsmouth his phone rang. It was the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth.

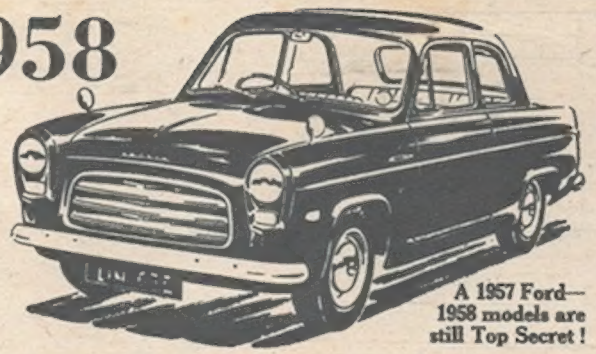
"Well done," said the admiral warmly.

But the best news of all came from 21st Army Group, from the scientists who took delivery of those pouches of sand from Scott-Bowden and Smith.

That suspected peat bog was good hard rock.

NEXT WEEK: The Coppists guide in the invasion armada

Win a 1958 CAR



A 1957 Ford—1958 models are still Top Secret!

plus FORTUNE PRIZE to the value of £1,025

HERE is *your* opportunity to enjoy thousands of miles of fun in a 1958 Ford car of your choice, plus the thrills of a big cheque—all for fun with words in Bullets!

You pick your prize Ford at the coming Motor Show. Or, if *all cash* would suit you better, there are years of fun ahead for you with £1,000 to use as you choose. Whichever reward you want for two, three or four words, be sure you post your coupon below by Monday, September 16!

1,620 BULLETS PRIZES

£300, £25, £10, £9, £8, £7, £6, 3 of £5, 10 of £2 10s.,
100 "Double Six" Prizes
1,500 2-in-1 Awards each with £1,000 Surprise
£100 EXTRA CASH—SEE COUPON BELOW

If your First Prize Bullet this week is the best of Contests 2,105/2,110, your £300 Award will be increased to value £1,025 (including Ford of your choice) —or £1,000 cash if preferred.

WAY TO WIN

Here's how to shape a Bullet. First, grasp the broad idea by enjoying the latest winners. Then choose as your starting-point any Example from list below. To it, add TWO, THREE or FOUR words to make the whole into a bright Bullet.

The Road Mac's Taking	Man From The Backwoods
To Strengthen The Bond	Notice To Quit
War In Industry	In Civvy Street
For The Queen	A Bit Of Overtime
Postmaster Marples	Over A Cup Of Tea
That New Car	Granny's Short-sighted, But
Our Neighbours	Played On Sunday
The Adventure Of Life	Agitator Baby
Small Potatoes	With Unselfish Devotion
Pampered	Came To A Sticky End

Last six Examples are incomplete: if you wish to use one, first complete it with a word of your choice—then make your Bullet as above.

When Dad Goes To..... A Bouquet For.....
Chained To The..... Made ..... Mad
Lonely..... ..... To Succeed

EXAMPLE ..... 6d. PER "BULLET"

BULLET .....

EX. .....

B. .....

EX. .....

B .....

EX. .....

B. .....

EX. .....

B .....

EXTRA £100 An extra £100 Cash Bonus will be shared among cash winners in Contests 2,105/2,110 whose successful efforts were one of five or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

2,107 Closing Postmark MON. SEPT. 16

I agree to rules and enclose P.O. entry-fee at the rate of 6d. per Bullet

P.O. value..... No.....

Signed.....

Address.....

.....

To receive Prize Offer details and coupons for next three contests FREE mark X here.....

LATEST WINNERS

"BULLETS" No. 2,102—FIRST PRIZE, £300 (or, if Tournament winner, £750 Award as offered): Mrs. Bean, Sunbeam Cottage, Whitfield, Dover:

Test Of Your "Stuffing"—When "Sat On"!

£25: W. J. Nott, Rose Cottage, Bickington, Barnstaple: To SWELL THE HARVEST — EVERY WORKER'S "MARROW" NEEDED.

£10: B. Smith, 39 Dorchester Road, Gynn Square, Blackpool: NOT A BAD CONVERSION — BARRACKS, FLATS—PARADE, PLAYGROUNDS!

OTHER AWARDS: £9: H. Bambury, 26 Pitfield Street, London, N.1: STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—*Fridays* NUMEROUS AS *Mondays*! £8: J. Price, 22 Salisbury Road, Liverpool: STORM IN THE KREMLIN—SOMEONE TOASTED "ABSENT COMRADES"! £7: J. Watson, "Treegarth," Lymington Road, Everton, Lymington: NOT A BAD CONFERENCE—TILL TRANQUILLIZERS WORE OFF! £6: S. Brooker, 83 Church Way, Iffley, Oxford: STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—HEAVY-HANDED MONOPOLIES, *Successful* "PICKPOCKETS." £5: G. Parker, 29 The Royds, Clayton West, Huddersfield: PUSHING OUT THE BOAT—LANDLADY—"MORE *Gravy*, ANYONE?" £5: H. Render, 13 Bowling Avenue, Bradford Road, Wakefield: PLACE IN THE SUN—*Footballers* SEEKING — SPECTATORS, *Shelter*! £5: B. J. Stevenson, 9 Carnock Road, Manadon, Plymouth: WHERE BRITAIN LEADS—OLD BAILEY—LAGS, DARTMOOR!

1,610 other awards have also been posted. (Tournament winner will be announced in earliest possible issue.)

RULES 1. First Prize for best Bullet received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all Bullets received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. at the rate of 6d. per Bullet. Fee submitted will be taken to cover Bullets in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated Oct. 12), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, Sept 28, for early news of No. 2,107 result.)

POST ENTRY Bullets 2,107, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.99

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Signature..... Occupation.....

(*Persons under 21 will be sent a Guarantor Form*). Age, if under 21 .....

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